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## Hound of the Road



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*By*  
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"Marri'd and other Verses," "The Passionate  
Heart," etc.

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## FOREWORD

*When that restless pilgrim whose unwritten story is partly suggested in the second half of these pages came to my house I brought him in and gave him meat and drink. But when he had rested a while he rose and went his way again leaving me with the fragments of the uncompleted and with a deep wonder as to why so many must follow a far star when a near one shines in the heart and is spoken in the deep moments of the inner self. That some of this wonder will remain with those for whom this is written is the hope of the writer.*

MARY GILMORE.

*At the Hotel Imperial, Goulburn,  
and toward the end of 1921.*

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I

TUNES OF MEMORY



## CHAPTER I

### THE FIRST LATCH

**W**HO set Saul among the prophets? . . . .  
Outside my window is a woman beating a child, and I cannot write for the terrible sound of his weeping. But I can say this: I would beat all women who beat children, and, to close the circle, all men who beat women.

The child weeps, and the woman with a tongue like a door-knocker still clacks on. Yesterday morning her husband called her vile names; to-day the child called them back to her, and she beats him, whereas she should first have beaten the man. Why should a man relieve his evil tongue in the ears of innocent children? In the streets he would be fined. But the home is a sacred place, and even the Law must wait outside, flicking its ass's ears on the pavement.

But the Law is not an ass. Dignity sits on its brow in spite of asses appointed; and wisdom is in its mouth. I know brave men who are judges. They sentence cowards; and when

the occasion offers, lift up the weak, and set the fallen on their feet. They spend their days judging the worst of life, and yet, when their work is over, they can meet good women with innocent eyes, and children with smiles. The Law is not always an ass, any more than the whipped child is always unkissed. For next door it is now cake for the beaten, and a penny to spend.

Poor little boys! Poor foolish mothers! And poor Humanity beaten of Mother Nature who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children even to the third and fourth generation!

As to the prophets. . . . Let David harp. The world has need of simples, of song innocent as bird-song and sweet as water over rock. Let the world sing, for an evil spirit is tormenting Saul—Saul who should be just and upright before the Lord. There is a darkness over the face of the earth that only the harping of harpers can break; the wise harpers, the singing harpers, telling old stories again with newer and more generous hearts. Better laughter than tears; better tears than blood; better love than a sword. *Who spoke of a sword?* Is not the sword sheathed, and peace upon the earth? *Who spoke of a sword?*

Is fear still the master of earth, and justice but a byword? Harp, David, and bring up from the deep that which shall quiet the breast of Saul. . . . . There was a dove once on the face of the waters; there was a Dove once spake out of heaven; there was a Dove that sought rest in the hearts of men. Where now is that Dove? Who has built it an house? Who of us hold out hands to call it home?

## CHAPTER II

### THE LIVING AND THE LOVED

**L**ONG ago, in Sydney, there was a man whom all men loved, for God gave him that grace before all other things. And there was a woman. I loved her, as indeed all who knew her loved her.

She had not one perfect feature, this woman, yet she was lovely, for in her face was something that rested the eyes of all who looked upon her. Short-sighted, a wide mouth, a not-much-of-a nose, an undistinguished chin: that was her face, her features in catalogue. Her glance dwelt, like a bird, now here, now there. Was it her eyes that called? Surely it was her mouth! Was it her mouth? No! it was the fleeting things that crossed her cheek, that rested on her brow, that fled through all the delicate texture of her sensitive skin.

Now and then we find, as we travel the road, that the face is the woman, the woman is the face. But with her the face was but the tabernacle of the winning. Her hair was



gold; masses of it, sheaves and cascades of it. And when she was dead, far away in Ireland a woman-poet wrote of her, "Golden heart and golden head."

She had character and temperament and wit, and with all of these she had knowledge, for she had lived. In early life she had played the Irishwoman in the heart of her country's events, and Parnell had turned to her for sympathy and faithful trust long before the world had crowned him with crucifixion. Poetry moved with her fingers; her voice made music in the kind Irish talk which modulates like brooks rippling in tiny cascades over rock sweetened by sand. And above all she was true mate of the man whom all men loved. But the man whom all men loved was married. He had children because he was married. He was married because once he had youth. Oh, the young lives caught in a net! Youth fades, and what is left? Life grows, and asks for what is not. Thirst would drink, and the brook is shallow. And, later, the soul that would submerge in another finds but the aridity of the arrested.

The woman I loved died, and in her dying the man comforted her. Afterwards he too died; alone. Yet he had kept his marriage

vow. When he suffered his own knew not even that he ailed. But she, in her grave she would have known. . . . To whom was he contracted? To his true mate? Or to the mother of his children?

The child is the symbol of the contract. We are all one, false and true, ignorant and learned, good and bad; and life is a small fish that makes its way anywhere. "Give me the best," says Life, "but, lest life fail, I take anything." And for impatient Life, which swallows the husk and misses the grain, "anything" it oftenest is. And, after all, why not "anything"? Is the right hand any better than the left? No better, only more used; no better, only given more authority; no better, only more taught; no better, only more made leader. The left-handed man is the equal of the right-handed.

"Yet is there rock, and small sand." . . . But the rock is made of sand, and a man without it is nothing, so that we say of the weakling that he has no sand. *Sand. . . . Sand. . . .* What is sand? The child of fire. And fire? The child of heat. And heat? The child of life. And life? God knows! But sand, it would seem, is source of all dust risen to newer shape; dust that feeds the grass; dust that is

mud of ocean, and that is rock; dust that God raised up and breathed upon, making it woman and lovable; making it man and loved. The wind blew out all other dust but this! This stood, and the wind went weeping over it.

There is a city where the mountains pierce the sky, and Rio watches the morning star. By the shimmering blue of the water the houses stand red and white; the peach fills the streets with its scent, the orange and the lemon give dreams. Behind it the forest climbs to the Corcovada and the foot-hills; and behind the foot-hills rise the Sierras. God! what a wonder set in Thine eternal blue! . . . . And they are sand; rock and root, peak and canyon, they are sand; sand that was dust; sand that will be dust.

God built Himself deserts of sand for palaces. The sun burned and purified them. The sea came and ground them in the soft hands of its mighty strength to dust, and the dust became mud. And out of the mud, out of the ooze and the slime, came life individual.

Man looks on the blue of the Sierra in wonder. He looks at the blue of a child's eyes and wonders more. Whence came the blue? From ancestors. Why? . . . . And there is no answer save the sound of water lap-lapping on sand. O Youth most beautiful,

with whom is all the contract of life, art thou, too, but dust? . . . . But oh, youth so beautiful, with whom is all the contract of life, how wise thou art; and how blind, how divinely blind!

## CHAPTER III

### OF DEFINITION

THE ever-living tales that men tell are always told among men; the tales that women tell are told to children. The Decameron is not a woman's book, nor is it a child's. And I wonder, when I see the old men magpies clustered on a bough, if the tales they tell are only for the old men among them—or even if they have such tales at all! And if they have none why have we them and not they? Are tales one of the signs of evolution, or are they one of its sins?

A man once told me that he regarded high heels as one of the sins of evolution. Yet he regarded present civilization as the crown of evolution. I replied that it was a somewhat heavy crown, that crowns were unnatural, that, since man only walked on the sole of his foot when he stood upright, and since, as a baby, he wore his toes and not his heels in crawling, so high heels might even be natural and primitive, and not really a sign of the civilized in man! He said the idea was too fanciful to

be admitted. Yet it is not all a fancy that some people are plantigrade and demand low heels, and some are digitigrade and, walking on their toes, spurn the ordinary heel.

And thinking of that talk, I am wondering if all that is written here is not too fanciful to be admitted by this dry old world of facts and figures, and things measurable in feet and inches. For how shall one mind, from behind the printed word, reach another? How tell its thought to be understood? What impalpable hand reaches out from mind to mind? How, telling its own story, does it know that of the other?

Like footfalls in the dark, some unseen presence within goes out with its lantern of the mind, and another in the distance sees and hails it, and there is pow-wow where neither you nor I can reach. And yet it is you and I all the time. Who talks? What talks? Which of the beings that is you talks to me, which that is I talks to you? What invisible hands lift us nearer, what invisible palms push us apart? The flowers of the garden stand each in its place, and are visited in turn by the bee. He rolls in the golden pollen of one, and in the orange or the red of another, and carries his load, pale, or bright, or dark,

and leaves it, touching this and that as he goes. And out of his coming and going seed comes and life grows. Who or what is the bee of man's mind? . . . . Invisible, eternal, passing through space as though it were not, not held by doors, not stayed by keys, lip knows it, ear hears it, yet eye never sees it; wider than ocean, lighter than air, swifter than wind, it comes higher than heaven and keener than light! What is it? Life, love, vibration, aura, essence . . . . *God*. O Wonder of Wonders, spoken we know not how, how shall a man who knows not himself make definition of God!

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HOUSE OF MEMORY

**L**IFE has so many doors! A man may sit in a chair and go through the world with his eyes, through the air with his ears, taste all things with his tongue, and know the scent of a flower though there be no flowers by his lonely window. All these things he can do, himself a world within himself. But will he know things as others? Will he be able to bring others into his own encircling world?

No man knows anything as another knows it. The rose that is pink to me may be white to you and orange to someone else. But we will all call it pink, because, whatever the word may mean to them, everyone else calls it that. The label is tied on it. But there is no guarantee that the words on the label will denote the same thing to everyone! In a world of strangeness we go. We touch a leaf and find the familiar; we raise a stone and find the known. But what of the multitude of the unknown even in the things we



touched? Our touch is but a point in a surrounding horizon, just as we stand, ourselves, a point in the circle of the heavenly horizon. We make no question of our strange world, because the familiar shuts the door; that door which only the wise and the foolish seek to open: for knowledge is endless, but not so man's life. And who, then, would try to "stoup the sea" of eternity with the cockle-shell of three-score years and ten!

No one knows what another knows. All that we have in common is an alphabet. But the words which we make of it are not all used alike. One says "shall" where he means "will," and another "will" where he means "shall." . . . . But one thing comforts: we all know that "a" is "a". And because "a" is our creation, it is "a"—till we change it.

From a point we begin in certainty. All other things are relative, and the wider we go the more we find the unsuspectedly relative. And yet perhaps, after all, the more certain. Certainty does not lie with proof, but with being. Proof is only man's measure laid on the knowable and the unknowable, even when the unknowable lies in the visible stars. There are the things perceived which are never proven. Who made the Milky Way? and why?

When you come down in the train from Killara you see the lights of Sydney like a bandeau of stars on the Harbour front. And when you stand on the Fox Valley Road, at Warrawee, they lie in the distance in a mist of light, a Milky Way upon the earth, a dust of diamonds on the ring of the horizon. And what do you know about them? They are the stars of man's creation; but, beyond that, what could you know if you did not read of them, or go to see them? And the stars? The stars are worlds? . . . . How do you know? Might they not be, as some have said, but thoughts in the mind of the Eternal! And can you prove that they are not?

"A" means "a" . . . . So be it. Yet if it were not that mind speaks to mind in a way that science has still failed to find or to define, we could not get past that first initial meaning of "a" being "a". More meaning would be impossible, and we should still be as the animal.

Words are the door-knockers of the house of the mind, the pebbles thrown up at the windows to call and awaken those within. Those within use words back again, yet both speakers will have interchanged more than words; more than voice has uttered itself and

answered. Something has spoken which goes where words cannot reach, using language as a luggage-van, and words as portmanteaux of meaning.

Why is man different from his fellow animals? Says the pianist, "I will stretch and make flexible my fingers!" and he plays in the whirlwind of ten thousand intricate and flexible movements. But the worm is more flexible. And the violinist plays on the stairway of the strings, that ladder where sound like a living thing flies up and down. His fingers flutter, and he bows like the wind in storm. But a cat, with a stroke of her paw or a leap in the air, is quicker. And then man says, "I will stretch my mind!" and he sees the stars and hears worlds sing; the grass talks to him, a flower gives him its scents and tells him its colours. Does a flower do this for the animal? Is it because of these things that man is different? Yet it might be that the animal, too, knows scents and articulated sounds and colours, and that man is different because he makes an artificial thing called law, and having made it keeps it. The animal dies for want of the artificial. Man makes it and survives by it. If the created would live he must also be the creator. We live by the ephemeridæ of our creation, law and

fashion . . . . fashion that is sometimes custom, and custom as often the chrysalis of law.

Man delves in the earth and makes homes of mud. The peeweeet makes his mud nest with his bill, but the man with tools, which are the product of his stretched-out mind. Think of a chisel and all that it means! Iron and coal and the miner of each; furnace and slag, forges and hammers . . . . armies and armies of men, and all of them soldiers of mind! And after these endless armies come the camp followers of market and trade. What knows an animal of these things? What are the tools of the tree? Housed in leaf, clothed in blossom, fortified in walls of bark, what are the tools of the tree? Strange cells working like coral in all the tides of sun and moon, of day and night, of spring and summer. Only it is not the coral itself that works, but the boneless points of jelly making "sea-bone" from circulations of ocean. Have these cells mind? If they have no minds why do they work? What works in them?

. . . . A dog lay at my feet to-day and slept, and in his sleep he dreamed. The writers who give to the lesser creatures actual man-likeness of quality do not appeal to me. I do not think

the brute—and I use the word tenderly of these fellow-creatures of man—I do not think he writes on the tablet of the mind as man does, though, without derogation to the human, we can compare him to man in all the fundamentals.

The dog Tweedie dreamed at my feet and, whimpering, woke; waking, he leaped up and looked for the things of his dream. But even as he looked the light went from his eyes, so that as he turned to me expression faded, and, with it, memory. Memory of what? Memory of ideas. And perhaps that is why man is different from an animal; he has memory of memories, of ideas. That which is dreamed is ideas, not facts visible and tangible. And no dog, however human, remembers a dream. Man's law, which he makes and keeps, is the sign of his dream; it is the moraine of his rivers of memories, of his memories of memories.

A dog remembers his home and comes to it with faithful longing and the affection of a loving heart when he has been away. But he remembers it not by its ideal in form but by its scents, for he will find home in the dark. And when he draws near to it after being away and looks up as he noses the earth, or the air, it is to seek for owning man, and not for roof and chimney!

A dog knows movement and sound, scent and direction. By direction he knows a door; but its shape is nothing to him. No dog ever looked upward to see a lintel or the ceiling; he only looks at the top rail of a fence when something is there and he wants to get over it. As to colour, does a dog know colour? Is colour the first step above initial fundamental animal reason (for a dog does reason), just as a sense of music is the mind's extension of the use of the physical ear?

A dog does reason. All animals reason. Even a guinea-pig does, or an ox drawn within sight and sound of a slaughter-yard. As to the dog, he reasoning says of a quarry, "It is far, or near"; of a scent, "It is quick, or faint", as the case may be; and if far he husbands his strength and goes slowly. Why? Because in his mind he has done a sum, in which the figures are the realities picked up by his senses. If you knew dogs well, you could tell how far or near the quarry was by the rate of nosing and the speed of the feet.

The untamed thing dies out unknown, and individually unstudied, while science is digging up dead bones and piecing fragments together to reconstruct the extinct. Almost within the memory of living man three continents have

been so emptied of the wild that protection for historical, pictorial, and scientific purposes has had to be ordained by law. We destroy in mass what science must re-build from splinters. The black man in Australia has forgotten his lore; his tradition is broken down; and now, measuring base coinage by such gold of truth as we may have, we are glad of anything we can get.

And as the primitive creatures, so the unstabled horse and the unkennelled dog will go. The city forgets both, but the bush remembers them. In the land of our childhood they were our friends. Memory is kind and keeps them. "There was a dog . . . . " "There was a chap had a dog . . . . " "Down the Castlereagh there was a fellow had a pup . . . . " Dead, all dead; the man who had the pup and the man who remembered the story.

Do you remember the horse that Wallace Hogg had in Silverton? Years ago; years ago! But, in memory, the sleek skin shines, and the kind eye brightens as he nuzzles up to his owner or waits like a dog for his master's coming. What wealth for remembrance flows through our hands and we know it not! Yet give God praise for ears, and for the tears that

will rise for what the ears heard of these friends of man. The idyll of the hawk is written; the song of the nightingale rises from the printed page, the Swiss loved one dog and set him up in stone. But who has written our dog? Kaleski? \* Kaleski wrote dogs, not the dog. It took a woman to write him; and that woman was Barbara Baynton. She alone wrote him as the man, next to his Maker, knew him.

But it is not enough. We want more. Who will give that more? The world forgets its dumb friends; forgets even the tears for the horses shot in the sands of Egypt and in the gullies of Palestine. "I killed men without compunction," said a soldier, "but I broke down when it came to my horse. . . ." The soldier was wrong as regarded man; but would you not trust a man who so loved his horse?

I sit in a chair and go through that old twin-door of memory and fancy which some open but which so many keep shut. And I find to-day that fancy is the gossamer with which one scarfs the remembered, lest its poor old bones should look bleak and bare in the harsh light of modern comparisons. In the early

\*"Barkers and Biters."



years there was but fancy, the fancy of a childhood to which the pulling of a leaf meant pain, and the death of an ant suffering. . . . We have all come a long way since then. But sometimes I wake in the night and hear the song of the pine-tree at the end of the house, and the sighing of the she-oaks by the creek. How long ago? Let the years tell. . . . A word will bring back the taste of she-oak nuts boiled with sugar, the smell of the dam where we went crayfishing on Yarrengerry, the odour of dried hide and half-dry bones at a trap-yard, the mud of the North Wagga Wagga flats where, in drought, the cattle bogged and struggled and died. And sometimes when one strikes a piano the years fall away and in far distance I hear Rosie Stinson singing; the tender singing of one whose nature was ever sweet and gentle. Then out of the dark the lights of Kindra shine from the open door and the friendly windows, and everyone is talking all at once about Elvira Pike going to be married. . . . To-day they tell me that two of Elvira Pike's grandsons died on Gallipoli. . . . Pike and Beveridge, Devlin and Barnes . . . Meurant and Bennett and Beat-tie and Stinson, how memory holds the names! . . . And one day at the Hotel Australia I saw

Matt Sawyer come in, bigger than ever his father was when we all went to the old Wagga school, and Durie and Bonnyngge wielded the cane. While at Bondi, the other day, Bonnyngge threw forty years out of sight in an instantaneous recognition! . . . . Ah, surely the compensation of age is the kindliness of remembrance. The asperities go and the sweetness remains; the smoke of combat dies, and, softened by time, the heart looks back through a mist of tears, in its own kindliness comforted.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WHISTLING MEN

**I** HEARD a man whistling in his room this morning as if he loved every note of the tune with his lips. In general men have forgotten how to whistle. They sing instead—harshly, loudly, unmelodiously, gutturally—in the bath. It advertises them as taking a bath, and that is about all. Better if they whistled.

In the early days of this country all men whistled. Some much, some little; all tune-fully, and a few beautifully. The throat that is harshened by exposure, whose cords are thickened by colds, can still whistle. Me, I whistle at times, just to remind memory of older days, and of those whose notes told of home-coming over soft bush-tracks and broken roads. But a woman is not supposed to whistle. When I was a girl only the ungentle did it. Then it crept up to the “genteel” and certain of the professionals, and, among these a whistling woman was not named with a crowing hen and a walnut tree, but was called “a siffleuse.” Sometimes the siffleuse was a

singer as well, as was that tall beauty of our early American colony in Sydney, Mrs. Van der Veer Green.

Now nobody whistles, not even tomboy girls. As for that debased form of a beautiful word, "genteel," once used for "gentle," or *gentille*, it has gone with the frock coats, the lavender waistcoats, and the grey trousers cut tightly to the calf and strapped down over the boots, which in the whistling days were gentlefolk's wear for men. Mr. Lavender wore them when he used to come on Sunday afternoon with his wife to Springfield to my grandmother's for tea, and Mrs. Lavender wore striped lavender silk. Mr. Lavender's waistcoat was made of silk to match. Wilkinson and Lavender were then only at their beginnings.

In the century just gone by men came home whistling with the teams. The clear high sound of \**"The Wild Colonial Boy"* was mingled with Wesley's hymns; the *"Come-all-yans"* followed Madame Carandini and talk of Lola Montez. Among the many came an elect few who spoke of Jenny Lind and of Patti; of the diggers who threw gold nuggets and bank-notes on the stage at Sandhurst and Yackan-  
\*See *"Old Bush Songs"* collected by Banjo Paterson.

dandah, and of that Cameron who shod his horse with gold; a publican, but a just and generous man.

The whistling men drove their clinking horse-teams down the old Bathurst road and the old Goulburn road. They camped at Yass (then "Yarr"), at Braidwood, and at Berrima. Camden, the Razorback, Cowper's Hill at Tarlo, Cobbity, the little scattered places built before the gold rushes brought up towns everywhere like crops of spring mushrooms, all knew the teams, all heard the whistling man, the rattle of the chains, the friendly "Gee Up!" of the homecoming.

Stars and the whistling man, the warm smell of home-hurrying horses, the faint whinney in the dusk at the rails, the candlelight from the half-opened door, the glow of the hearth fire, and the sound of children's voices—can you whistle them back, O Life? Only in memory. The old Hay Market, with its sweet smell of hay and corn and general produce, is gone, and we have the Haymarket instead, with its emporiums and its rattle and clatter of trams, its picture-shows and its down-at-heel scavengings of city life. God made the country. Man made the town for a dwelling place of

evil, even though good is there too. It was in the country that Abraham walked with the shining three, and Jacob saw the hosts of heaven in the road that lay near Haran.

And thinking of Abraham and Jacob, and so of that Old Book which has meant so much to our people, and to the history of the world, we recall that there we read of singing, of tabor and harp, of piping and of cymbals, but there is no word of a whistling man. Yet surely some earlier Pan played even in those days, and, losing his pipes, softly whistled to the skies, as he lay idle-thoughted in the shade, pulling grass blades through his fingers!

It is little we read of the whistling man in older England or in Scotland; except when swords whistled, and, in Scotland, the wicked on Sunday. But we find him in Ireland, where "he could whistle a bird off a bough, or the heart out of a stone." The exile of Erin was a sure man to find in the new lands; and perhaps it is to him who took the dancer's feet with him wherever he went that the new lands owe the whistling man of the early days. Over the Rockies they went whistling, Daniel Boone among them; over the Alleghanies, Louis Trefle's father among them; and down by the Andes and the coasts of Patagonia

where a rude red-headed Cameron gave his name to a wide bay; and over the Blue Mountains, the Liverpool Range, the Cullarin, the Gourock. . . . . Have you a very old grandmother? Ask her. Have you a very old grandfather? Ask him. . . . . And, indeed, when one thinks of it had Ned Kelly\* whistled more he might never have been hanged!

\*A noted bushranger in Australia.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE BENT TWIG

WHEN from the incubation of years of experience and thought a book is written quickly and warm from the heart, it is possible that, like the chicken from the shell, it comes forth a little surprised at the haste with which at last it arrived at being, wondering somewhat at its own newness, and dazzled, perhaps, by the too brilliant light of the concrete and more public world! One says "a book." But, after all, that thing between covers is the self. Only in a mirror does a man see his back, and the "self" sees itself only in a book. In everything else, in the acts and facts of daily life, it knows but the isolated word, the single action, and the individualized stress of personality. Books are not all alike, of course, even as to the self. Sometimes they mirror so small a part of the reality that, after one look, they are found to be so trifling that one does not look at them again. But once in a while the soul speaks, and not even the writer himself knows with



what self-revelation. For at times one finds the depths come to the surface. The underworld of life awakes like a bird which a passing ray of light stirs in a dark forest. Then the loves of the heart are spoken, the shallows are broken through and submerged by that which comes flowing forth.

But often, when one long silent writes a book, the theorist, reading only what is written, says, "This one did not write before because thought had not matured," or "because life had not touched him to emotion," or "because the hour had not struck." But, like the clock in the tower, the hour of capacity strikes many times, and passes without our being in a position to take advantage of it. Thus, as the waters of Australia, capacity flows out unconserved to that ocean which knows no individual boundaries within its mighty limits. The storage-waters of art and science, of all things that better life, are scarcely drawn upon because the wells are not sunk, and the well-buckets are set dredging in mud for a bare existence. The pearls are lost that the pig may feed; the cream of life is too often set to do the work of the clay.

There was once a child who sang as soon as it learned that words meant feeling. It

sang, like a bird, in the fury of the creative coming to expression, and, at the end of the outburst, sank nerve-wearied through excess of that spent force.

It sang because of an intensity of vitality which demanded expression; because of something that we call life stirring in its sleep, some spirit-harp answering wind and sun. It sang because life made it sing. And then the claims of life came and drowned the young, the singing years. Many times the clock of capacity struck; but the striking had to go unheeded.

And there was a sculptor who was a boundary rider. He cut sheep-shank bones into rings, and into saddles and bridles; saddles small enough to fit the little finger, with the tiny girth and every buckle and dee in its place. But he never cut marble. The marble was too far away. And who now on Mandamah ever remembers Shannon the Boundary-rider? . . . There is, in a desk in Sydney, a little saddle which is perhaps all that is left of Shannon and a whole life's capacity. The hour was struck every time that man took out his knife and nicked a cut upon a bone; but circumstances shut the door of opportunity.

I knew a boy in Victoria. He could tell

you when the first tiger-orchid came out, miles away from his home, and the kind of grass that showed its most likely place of growth. He discovered the first white boronia in his district, and knew the cry and call of every wandering bird. But he had no name for the flowers, and no classification for the birds. He had but dumb knowledge, depending on the pointing of a finger or the production of a plant, and but dumb thoughts, because none had come to give him language. He had facts without a name; his was genius without a wing; he held life's jewels in his hands, unpolished, denied their lustre.

The bush blossom called him; the insect led him. "He knows every spider in the bush!" said the neighbours, interested in knowledge, if not in the things that made knowledge. To him a spider was creation; the created telling the power of the Creator. To those about him it was but a spider, a thing to be crushed under foot, matter in the wrong place. "He is mad on the colour of them," they said in their crude way. What was a spider but a grey thing, speckled black, or red or brown? But the red and the black, the grey and the brown, were a new world to this boy with his fine sensitive senses and his strong native feeling.

Darwin loved not nature better than he. As with Agassiz, even the snake was not too deadly for his friendly searching eyes and hands.

A naturalist? . . . . At eighteen he was shearing. At twenty-three he was dead on the fields of France. In his death, the bush which is going, along with its myriad tribes and denizens, lost one who loved it; lost an interpreter, who said nothing to the world because none brought him the opportunity of learning the needed speech. He who would have made the wild plant a friend and fellow-housekeeper with man was like one who would learn French yet had no books, and no teacher. I grieve over that boy who never had a chance, for the rose is only scented where it blooms in the sun, and what is a mind but a rose of God?

There was another boy, near Tocumwal, on whom punishment fell constantly because of a white wall and a bit of charcoal. A burnt stick or a blue-bag drew out of him—as wind out of warm air, as light from the sun—something that longed for utterance. It was the Great God Himself, speaking out of a boy's mind in a lightning that would not be held. But the hand that should have balanced the

palette held a plough; and the sight that should have measured form and steeped itself in colour measured milk in a cow-yard.

I once met a girl in Paraguay who, in mud from a river-bank, modelled lambs and cats and pigs (and Kewpies before there were Kewpies), choosing her colours as the clay allowed. The native Paraguayans marvelled, half afraid of the work so like yet so unlike the living, for she added an individuality of the bizarre to everything she did. "*Milagro!*" they cried, as they looked at the work, and *Miracle!* it was. But there was no one there to tell the child that she had in her hand a ladder which might reach from earth to heaven!

And there was a man who knew the track of the quail, and the haunt of the wild bee; who felt the heart-beat of a horse, and realized the ancestral fear of the dog. . . . Poverty tied him, and only the dog and the horse read his message. The Bush, that should have made him, in its solitude ate him.

So, when I hear people talking of the benevolence of poverty as a helper to genius, and of how genius must "out," I ask, "Is genius independent of bread? Hath not genius appetite? Needs it not to eat?"

A cask can be emptied in either of two ways. One is by the slow process of drop by drop, which benefits no one; the other is by the free flow that quenches thirst, even the thirst of a world eager to drink and to be sustained. And genius that must "out" so often has only the "out" of that slow drop which is as useless to itself as to the world.

Even a plant must have time, a place and food, to grow. And what is thought but a plant of the mind? Poverty! . . . . Poverty! . . . . Poverty! . . . . Ah! man the judge of another, you do not put your corn in poor ground if you want a full crop, nor turn the herd on stony ground if you want milk! . . . . Poverty! . . . . Poverty is like frost; it is a good experience for the warm and the well-fed, whether plant or man, but it kills the crop of the poor. The oven has baked many a woman's full song to hard crusts; the clearing has sent many a sculpture to splinters; the hand of the delicate touch has too often been calloused by the grindstone of life. The baked bread was eaten, and none knew of the song lost in its baking, the trees fell, and none heard the cry of the dream. "Genius will out?" When I think of Genius and Poverty, I think of Hell without a bottom!

Minds are many. There are crows as well as nightingales. The cruelty is not in being a crow, but in silencing the nightingale. One may make brooms of roses instead of millet. Such a broom may sweep; it may even sweep best. But to use the rose as a broom destroys the rose; turns it from its true destiny; in the end it becomes merely broom. But no broom ever becomes a rose. There is no real exchange in these things. There is only the terrible loss of the subverted and the destroyed, and the cruelty of waste unhallowed by any compensating return of values.

## CHAPTER VII

### IN THE MIND OF A DREAMER

**T**HE mind turns upon many things, and I have often wondered if birds have a sense of colour. They are themselves so beautiful, even to the gloss of the crow and the soft grey of the Cockatoo Parrot, that it seems as if they should revel in colour. Yet I doubt if one of them ever looked at or saw the sunset.

I used to feed a friend's birds—canaries and a parrot. One morning I went out in a blue house-gown, and for a moment they thought I was a stranger. Was it the colour? or was it the accident of some other cause?

It takes children some time to realize colour; or rather, not so much to realize it as to react to it. Yet some colours are very early perceived. Back almost behind memory I can remember screaming at sight of my mother; her arms held out to me made me scream with greater fear. Others hushed me, and voices explained that it was only a red coat and that I was not to be afraid. I knew nothing of red. What was red to me? I only saw the familiar



in something strange which made it strange to me. The curious sense was not that of red, as I know it now, but of something dark—something that ate light. To-day I understand it as having been something foreign, to which the eye had not previously given lodgment, nor the brain a name. I know now that I saw it as things are seen by the blind newly come to sight.

One does not always realize that colour can be just as much “a stranger” as a strange land, or that acquaintance has to be made with it just as with a human being. . . . What a queer place the world must be for babies! . . . Take even a dog right away from where he belongs, drop him in surroundings hitherto unknown, give him one shout of menace, and then see how the unfamiliar adds to his sense of the fearful!

I sat idly thinking and dreaming, and suddenly, with the vividness of an illuminating realization such as only comes sometimes to life, it struck me what a gift thought is! Is it any wonder man dreams of wings and of a-life-to-come without pains and penalties when within him moves this untrammelled and un-suffering thing? However a face, or a heart, or a tooth may ache, thought is free of pain.

And yet a man is only aware of his pain through thought. Man dreams wings because thought needs no wings, coming and going without limitation. It wanders and rambles, and if a man had to say where and to what end his thoughts went for even one day, it would take him a whole year—and then he would not have told all. As well try to count the atoms of water under a bridge as a day's thought! Quietly it goes in some cases, but oftenest like a bird flying from limb to limb of a tree. And just here, in one of those flights, I would ask, How does a bird fly straight to a limb or a fence? He does not fall, he is not drawn down by the earth, and he goes so much straighter than you or I on our wonderful, lumbering, absurd and beautiful human feet. Surely he jumps by wing as a boy by feet, and measures distance as a carpenter measures a fillet or a board. In his mind, he says the sum of it to himself just as does a boy or a man; even as the man behind the cannonade whose shells fall unseen into the unseen beleaguered distant city.

I have seen a galah measure distance, head on one side, exactly like a tradesman, like a woman considering when cutting out and joining pieces in materials, like a boy at

"taws." When the galah had his full wings, he measured at a glance; one look, and he flew. But when his wing feathers were cut, he carefully and slowly considered all the factors—strength, balance, and distance; he tested muscles, and collected himself in the will to effort, just as you or I might. Shall I—allowing for limitations—set this bird down as an inferior? Shall I set him down as essentially more different from me than the newly-born babe which knows neither distance, nor form, nor needs, and whose mind has not yet begun to act?

I am friends with the ant. I have loved him ever since like all children I let him run over my hand, turning it side or back upwards so that he could not run off. The tiny feet of the ant: think of them! And the little steps! And the little young baby ant, tiniest of all. . . . When we were children it was a constant wonder as to why they were not in families as we were—brothers and sisters in groups, and no two of one size. All the "grown ups," with few exceptions, were of one size, and all the smallest ones of another. There were no Kenwiggsses among the ants! And it seemed so strange.

And as to the ant. . . . I have seen a dog scent a half withered dead beast and run to roll himself in the mouldering offal. There are minds like that. But there are other minds like the ant; the clean, seeking, wandering, cleansing ant. Have you ever noticed that what the ant touches it leaves stripped to the shining bone? The venom of the snake is in his jaw; but the ant leaves the skeleton clean, and the poisonous jaw gleams white in the sun. . . . And there are minds just like that. They cleanse the dark, unsoiled by the dark.

Perhaps we are all like ants. When we were children, bush children, we used to take an ant from one nest and put it on another to see the fight. The world has its ants in other nests to-day. . . . When we saw a "hindquarter" carried off, we felt as the station butcher does when he has his beast clean and high on the station gallows. Perhaps the leader in a battle feels the same when he cuts off the arm of an enemy. As the combatants fought we watched; and I recollect that the boys were more hardened than the girls; they knew no pity. There are always emotions under all the activities in girls. Often in our eagerness we forgot to keep guard and a green jumper came and caught us in the rear. . . . The world has green jumpers in its rear to-day.

I remember the smell of the sun on an ant's nest, and the smell of the ants on a sunny day. I remember it because it was a mixture of perceptions; the ant, the sun, the earth, and all faint earth-smells. When the scent of the gum leaves came, or of the myall blossoms, or of the wattle, they seemed rich and full . . . . foreign, impermanent, and not of the earth. We knew the earth, kind and brown, with ants all over it. The earth to us was a living thing, full of life that moved. The air was a void, and the sky a blue tradition. Our world, our earth, stopped at the top of our heads. We lived with the things that dwelt in tussocks, climbed small stems, and made themselves tiny holes in the earth. Sometimes the hole had a trap-door. . . . .

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE TRAP-DOOR SPIDER

SOMETIMES the hole had a trap-door. . . . .

I recollect a spider that had a hole in a bare patch of ground. Small tussocks of native grass grew scattered around it, eking out a hardy existence in Riverina red earth which cracked and crumbled, bone-dry in the heat. But the spider's patch was bare of any shelter except at that early hour when drowsy insects rushed recklessly abroad for food, and at evening when the tired wanderers and workmen of this much circumscribed world came home with inattentive minds. His shelter then, his camouflage, was the shadow cast by the grass on either side of his citadel in the morning and evening sun.

Grey and black as only a stick in a very dry country can become, he lay snug in his hole till hunger called him out. Sometimes, to give his legs exercise, he crossed the expanse of his little plain; a streak, an impression, that might have been a whirling screw of sickle-shaped

grass-seed in the wind, or the shadow of a butterfly idling by. The open danger-space passed (a No-Man's Land quite a foot wide), he rested in the fortress of a tussock, while his house stood open to the air, and, door well back, lost some of its close summer heat. Perhaps he laid plans and combed his zebra hide in the shade; perhaps he merely rested and cooled his head and heels. It might be that he slept. Maybe he watched. . . . We never knew; for at the least touch, even at the falling of a certain kind of glance on him, he went like lightning back to his hole, and the door closed. We never caught him, though we stood on three sides at once, three eager children holding back from closer search till priority of discovery gave precedence to one. Indeed we never even well saw him; the grey streak was too swift, the door too soon shut. That door once shut only knowledge could find it again! And sticks down the hole never reached him; at least not as far as we ever knew!

Near where the trap-door spider dwelt, the Willy Wag-tail used to swing, like a swaying leaf, on a clod in the long dry furrow of an adjacent wheat paddock which ran down to a

shallow creek where water flowed only when rain was heaviest. In spring the cockatoos watched that field in its sprouting green, massed in clusters on dry ring-barked trees which had not yet been grubbed, and, at sight or sound of a gun, flying to the shelter of the bush behind the fences. In summer the magpies and the Kookaburras used to follow the plough as the furrow turned over like a lazily rolling dog. . . . And in the middle of it all was an old boot, sun-bitten, brittle, and black. We feared that boot. Spiders spun in it; "black spiders with red on them!" Once we poked it with a stick and ran. . . .

The story of the boot was that a man, having no stick, had jumped on a snake's head and the snake's fang had gone through. The man died. A swagman, finding a good pair of boots in an empty hut, put them on. He too died. Then someone came and threw them out into the paddock. Or so we believed.

*The mark of Cain.* . . . Well versed in the Scriptures, we called that paddock Cain. But we forgot about that when the straw was in stacks and the stubble covered everything with its grey sunlight, and when, sliding endlessly down, we were buried in sweet smelling straw! But then, there were men about, and



horses stamping and champing; and who could be afraid where there were men? In those days it was all men; the only women we knew were those of our own family, for these were the days of the pioneers.

But the paddock and the boot. . . . We never doubted, because we never asked. The beginning of knowledge is a crooked little mark, isn't it? And we never asked because we never doubted. Children are like that. Our attitude was that of primal men in unknown forests. The world begins anew in every child; earlier in some, later in some, but anew in all children. The mystery, the horror, the dread of the unknown, is no less and no more because a thousand, ten thousand, a million years have passed since the first man had felt it. Nay, since even the first animal sweated fear.

The familiar is like your skin; it covers all, though unawarely to us. The strange brings doubt, the unknown awakens disquiet. . . . I have seen dogs tremble in the shadows like children, and heard horses snort and shake with a man's dread.

Fear knows neither class nor caste, neither race nor kind. It speaks but one language; its whip fits every hand; it makes brothers-in-kind

of all things. The beast is not too low for it, nor man too high. Yet faith will lift a man above it, even when all else fails. It lifts the brute, for the brute has faith in man, the seen. Is man only just reaching out in an effort for something beyond himself, something which will in time evolve in him new powers? Is all evolution rooted in the physical and bounded by it? Or is there evolution upon evolution, boundless as the stars and high as infinity? . . . .

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PAINTER'S MOTHER

**T**HIS is a life-story, not of a leaf or an insect, not of a man, but of a woman who looked like The Picture of Whistler's Mother, and who spoke with the voice of Raftery the last of the Singers; and of how a picture came to the walls of our Art Gallery.

It began a long time ago, when a young girl, who bore the burning name of Brennan, left her home in Ireland to go to a far land. There she married. Her husband was in the Frontier Legion; that body of law-giving, law-defending pioneers who carried courage and love of adventure to distant and remote places, where old order, failing, was to be replaced by new. In the replacing much breaking had to be done on both sides. But the union of two contrary things can only come by an initial injury. Yet it is lucky if the breaking do not leave scars of healing like the graft on an old peach tree, and such as can never be forgotten.

Take Ireland. How the searing scars remain and the old wounds ache! Did you read to-

day's cables? No, never mind the date! Any day of the year will do. . . . Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar. Scratch half the modern pushing, progressing, pulsing, singing world and you find a Celt; for Ireland—and Scotland too—has a wide inheritance of homes in all countries. And because of this, in unexpected places and in widely removed generations, a word of the Arran Isles or a hint of the brogue will suddenly rise up to confront you and tell of history long gone by. As Noah's dove brought her olive-leaf to tell the story of the earth's surface, so in pampa, in prairie, in steppe; among the ice-fields of the polar regions, the snowfield of Alps or Himalaya; by the deserts of the ancient world, or in the Digger's hut of the new, a word picked up tells of that flood of Celtic blood, which streamed in widening currents across the world.

The song of Erin is found in the literature of every land. Better to be a world singer than a world conqueror. Richard, Lion-hearted though he was, lives more sweetly, even in history, because of Blondel; and the Bruce is the more the Bruce because of the song of the Douglas. Song? . . . Yes, song indeed, for what is a song but a word!

"We are the music-makers,  
And we are the dreamers of dreams,  
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,  
And sitting by desolate streams.

With wonderful deathless ditties  
We build up the world's great cities,  
And out of a fabulous story  
We fashion an empire's glory. . . . ."

Not Ireland, perhaps, but an O'Shaughnessy singing.

And the little Irish girl, she carried her song and her spirit with her to Africa. And there she saw day after day the stringing herds of Springbok go by, and up in the hills she heard the lions roar and the cataract leap with the thunder, while the chattering Hottentots quaked in the kitchen. "Courage!" she said, and they crept nearer for comfort. "Courage!" she said, and they laughed in the release from fear.

And children came to the little Irish girl, she all alone the one white woman at that far outpost, and her husband, gone out in the early morning, came home at night to find her ruling her house. Medicine she gave to the sick, counsel she gave to the foolish; the presumptuous she rebuked as only the woman of Ireland can. There is in such women that of

the virginal which, holding itself pure, with no more than a look compels purity.

As the children grew, she took them out and showed them the mighty forest and the strange tropical flowers, the black mass of the mountains, and the rose and gold of the sunset. With hands in hers they heard the winds sing down the valleys, and the music of the waters reaching out to the sea; the crack of a rifle woke the echoes, the snap of interlocking horns spoke of the combat of the wild, the trumpeting of the elephant rose and smote on the stillness of dusk.

And then the years, turning, brought her to New Zealand; and, turning again, brought her to Sydney. In Sydney I heard the story as she told it. And I would that I could have told it in her own words, for then it would have lived for ever. For she had the eyes of a painter and the heart of a singer of songs.

As for the picture: I find that story is not for me to tell, for the painter\* says the fierce light that beats upon the published is not for him, and that the telling must wait till he is dead. As I am many years older than he another will be the teller, and I shall not be there to read it.

\* Elioth Grüner.

But what is told here is for the woman who looked like the portrait of Whistler's Mother, and who spoke in the tongue of Raftery the last of the Singers.

## CHAPTER X

### CHIMNEYS OF HISTORY

**I** KNEW a woman once—why should I hesitate to say it?—she was my father's sister. When she died the minister who stood last at her grave said, "I pray God that I may have as white a soul as she at the Judgment Day!" For this was a woman who put self last, and duty and the needs of others first.

And the minister, he believed in the Judgment, that man; in a lifting of dry bones, new-clothed from the grave; of limbs rising out of old battlefields coming to join long mouldered, re-awakened bodies; perhaps even of lost babies rising in shoals and crying to find their mothers. And my own troubled wonder when, as a child, I sat under the thunder of Free Kirk forty-minute sermons on hell (and it *was* a long time to talk about that place!) always used to be, How would the babies know?

As for the minister, all ministers are children, even those of the dour old Kirk; and perhaps these most of all, for if they are not



they become too sophisticated and worldly-wise, and forget the Key of Heaven. And though a worldly minister may be a very charming man, no matter what else he may do, he is of no use unless he can bring you the Keys of Belief! Without these he is but one of the veering, surging crowd that fights and struggles, knowing neither its beginnings nor its endings.

As to the Judgment and its Day, I still remain a child, unable to lose the family in the individual. There will always be, for me, Father and Mother and the children. "The children" are the family. They never grow up. They are always holding hands, just little things, and "the baby in arms." That is, for us.

For others, the family flocks have to be much more looked after by father and mother, always with someone holding the next eldest by the hand. They walk, these others, but neither as orderly nor as surely as we, and the parents have more anxiety as to whether they are all there or not, or whether one may not be left behind. There is never any danger as *we* march along looking round upon wonders. Nor for *us*! Maybe it is the catechism and the doctrine of Election over again in a child's

mind. Maybe it is the egotism of the individual: "God bless me and my wife, John and his wife," without the "Us four and no more," for, in my Judgment Day, all come home and none are lost.

It has always been something of a medley to me, that gathering of the world's clans; something like a picnic, or going a journey: and we went many journeys when I was a child. Everything is at sixes and sevens, yet sixes and sevens on a string that will put all right at the end, for the vision of a child is full of charity. I think, too, that there was a feeling that, like picnics and journeys, there would be something of weariness and disillusion at the end; that the trump promised more, and the flesh, however truly risen and young, gave less than one expected. Bones would still be bones, and ache after outings.

As to the trump, as one upon whose heart the cry of a lost sheep came as a stab, I always heard the babies louder than the trump. The loneliness of the little struck harder than the tears and the pains of the wicked. The mercy of God was infinite and could cover the wicked; but for loneliness there was no covering; it had to be borne without help and single-handed. . . . Think of the little feet run-

ning: such a crowded place: such endless faces to be looked into before one found one's own and the safety and comfort of sheltering arms! I have always thought that the Catholic Churches—Eastern or Western—have the best of us there. They give the babies to that woman of all women, the universal Mother, Mary Immaculate, who, when the time comes, will put all mournful little ones into the encircling arms of their own. There will be no picking of strange ways through open graves for these, no calling of *Mother! Mother!* across wild distance, no anguish of the lost, no trembling limbs and tear-stained darkened eyes, there! We Protestants leave too many anxiously wandering and lonely for want of a generously comforting idea, for want of the symbol that through eyes and hands reaches the heart and kindles the understanding. After all, what are words but images, which memory and intent hold in their separate niches? What are ideas themselves but images, more impermanent than words, more deliberately and intentionally kept in place? The image of remembrance is but the hand and the number of the clock of memory, whether for the dead, for the living, or for religion. And if you love God and would do His works, you will dress

the reminders of His will in the best that you can give, whether the reminders be in words, in Cathedrals, in music, or in statuary; aye, or in acts!

Religion has its vestments of the mind as well as of the body; its pinnacles and its spires and its humble tabernacles; its meat for the eye and its bones of the spirit. And the delight of the eye is itself worship, for the eye is of God and worships without lips or hands. We of the old Scottish Churches would do well to remember that beauty which can live on as beauty, generation after generation, is His true minister, and learn a little from it. Is there no lesson in the sunset drenching the high densities of heaven with colours? In that the stars shine and quiver like lamps before an altar, instead of being dull and leaden? Suppose that a rose had never bloomed, that a leaf had never ripened in the sun; that love, the blossom of all beauty, had never lived! Shall only the dumb' worship in beauty, and man, "the soul and crown of things," deny it?

There is a bigotry that refuses the beautiful, and, refusing, worships the ugly: that, denying charity a home in its thoughts, is, of itself, but fit to be outcast of charity. To that bigotry we should deny any place in our hearts.

. . . . When that charitable woman who was my aunt died, there were many who felt clods on the heart. The coffin is not the only thing that makes hollow answer to the earth at death! A Highland woman with a homely face in spite of her long pedigree, she had a grace of the spirit and of bodily carriage which made one forget her looks; made one remember that the spirit is more than the body, and manner more than riches.

“When your Aunt Belle danced with your father,” said one, “everyone in the room stopped to look at them. She had a plain face, but they made the handsomest couple in any ballroom.” And as he said it, recollection, wistful-eyed and tender for things irrevocably gone, gentled his face and spoke in his spirit, so that one read there more than the words. And here, too, was beauty; the beauty of remembrance and of long, long years of affection. It is something, after all, to be Highland, and to have the Highland love and the Highland fidelities.

I remember once when, after many years in what was then “foreign country” over the mountains—that is to say, where there were none of the old Scottish or Irish people—two of us went to visit our Argyle folk. “Ah,

Johnny!" said our aunt, her voice full of feeling and the thought of other days, "You are your father over again!" Then, her hand touching his coat, the sensitive skin sent instant message to the responsive house of the brain, and almost in the same breath she asked, "'Tis the fine cloth! and what might it have cost, now?"

There are two women whom remembrance couples together in my mind. They are Beatrix Esmond and this woman: women who faced the world and whatever it might give them, and died gallantly. They never whimpered, and they never whined. Yet the one was as selfish as the other was self-forgetful. One took from life, and one gave; but in her taking Beatrix Esmond gave something that made dead bones live.

As for my aunt, when on past sixty, she was still the woman with the open hand, and the good will for a neighbour in trouble. A week after I went to see her, a poor neighbour falling ill, she rose in the dark and, morning and evening, trudged through wet grass, climbed fences, crossed a creek, followed the thin path through the shaking bog to tend this helpless one, milk her cows, see to the pigs and poultry, feed and dress the children and send them off to school. Ah! "And shall not love-

liness be loved forever?" For what was this but that immortal loveliness whose body of the spirit shall never see corruption!

"Why don't you ride?" I asked her who was once famous for her riding, for the days of her nursing ran into weeks. "I ride!" she exclaimed, "I haven't been on a horse for twenty years!" And the road was not one for driving, by reason of the long way round, and the intervening farms, the gates, and the fences. She could walk as quickly as she could ride.

They called it "Argyle" in those days, and the kindly Scottish folk called it Argyle to the end, even though the stranger came who knew no Gaelic, and changed both the heart and the face of the place. Sometimes, indeed, the stranger was their own child, restive of the old, eager for the new. . . .

We read Gilbert Parker and dream of the wonderful lives in the early settlement of the French Canadian valleys, the simple kindliness of heart, the unworldly ways, the gracious gift of courtesies now fallen into disuse, the patience, the heroism, and the pride of action. The mists of years cover what was ugly, the veil of distance beautifies that period of

romance. It is all at our doors in this last homogeneous settlement of Australia, perhaps the last of its kind to be found in the world. For here the gold of old romance from the still olden and unchanged Highlands was poured out in the new mould of this young land. In those days, now far away, there was iron need of adaptation to the strange, with all the heart-longings for the old; in them was the sternness of ancient pride, with the poverty that knew no by-gones; daring and adventure, it all lay there. Nay! it still lies there waiting for the willing hand and the sympathetic heart to lift and make it live again. The day will come when, in folk talk, these scattered hearths will all be re-built and the drying twig bud to leaf anew, so that young hearts that we shall never know will ache to think that they were not of the old brave young years; young eyes will glow and suddenly grow dim with a longing of soul because of stories told round a simple and neighbourly table. In the twilight the spirit shall awaken and the day tell the story.

In the long fallen houses of the smoke-blackened rafters the Bible lay on the shelf above the fireplace, its pages peat-brown from the reek, its leaves made soft and tender to the touch with much handling in reverent read-



ings. In Gaelic, it kept the olden tongue alive as song keeps tradition. Indeed it was the song of their lives, almost as real as the songs of the forefathers. To some it was more; and in death it was with them.

By their firesides they chanted litanies of genealogy: Donald son of Hugh, son of Donald Dhu, son of Alexander, son of John of Fassifern, son of Lochiel. And one Lochiel was the gentle Lochiel, and one was the great Lochiel. And when I first saw that picture with its "Come weal, come woe, I'll follow thee," used as an advertisement for whiskey, I thought it an impertinent intrusion into the family history; all the forefathers rose up in the blood in a fierce desire to tear it down. An advertisement on that monument to the gallant Colonel at Quatre Bras could not have hurt more. . . .

In the chanting of genealogies the Tailor of the Axe came out of the shades and was no more remote from the fathers than their own children. He grew as a giant with the years, and there Ban rode and Fingal halloed. They wept with the children of Glencoe mourning over a ruined hearthstone. The cold of that stone pierced the hearts of hundreds born on the water-shed of the Wollondilly, who had

never been nearer the Highlands than the tossing of the caber at Crookwell, at Laggan, at Taralga, at Goulburn.

For over a generation later you could tell a Goulburn man by his speech, no matter where you met him, the soft Highland speech, uttering Australian talk, colour-woven with the poetry of the Gaelic. . . . Ah, the Bonnie hills of Scotland. . . .

In the years before Henley and Newbolt and Rupert Brooke, no man said England as the exile said Scotland, or the Highlands; nor, to tell the full truth, as that blood-brother of Erin spoke the holy names of Ireland. From the Kyles of Bute to Stornaway and far Caithness there dwelt the wistfulness of deep-rooted love, and the cry of the exile spoke it afar. The Stuart was still the Stuart; the German Georges were but the children of "the wee, wee German Lairdie."

Yet hear Henley, and what one voice deep and true can do for a land!

What have I done for you,  
    England, my England?  
What is there I would not do,  
    England, my own?  
With your glorious eyes austere,  
As the Lord were walking near,

Whispering terrible things and dear  
As the Song on your bugles blown,  
England—  
Round the world on your bugles blown!

. . . . .

Ever the faith endures,  
England, my England:—  
'Take and break us: we are yours,  
England, my own!  
Life is good, and joy runs high  
Between English earth and sky:  
Death is death; but we shall die  
To the Song on your bugles blown,  
England—  
To the stars on your bugles blown!

. . . . .

Mother of Ships whose might,  
England, my England,  
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,  
England, my own,  
Chosen daughter of the Lord,  
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient Sword,  
There's the menace of the Word  
In the Song on your bugles blown,  
England—  
Out of heaven on your bugles blown!

Something of the Celtic is there in that which is not named as the Celtic; a Highland note of love, of pride, of death, of duty, of the sword, in a voice not Highland. And it could not have been written for any one of the

German Georges. But it was written in the time of a woman-queen who boasted of her descent from the Stuarts. And yet, as Mr. A. G. Stephens said in *The Bookfellow*, over that noble ode Kipling laid his brass! . . . . But the world has need of brass, and answers brass.

The bagpipes and the harp sang like the wind in the trees; but the brass comes like the feet of trade echoing in sleeping streets, like the steam that whistles ships to move and wheels to turn. It speaks of the gorgeousness of merchandise, and of commerce threading the world with a keel and needling it with wires. It is a music of ruthlessness, of coarse appetites and strong odours, of glaring show and vulgar noise. Yet by volume it gives some sense of majesty and seems the very voice of crude and all-dominating power. But, to us who read and remember there comes, holy as incense, tradition spoken in the utterance of a long-loved word, and in the far sound of singing lips; for romance lives in a dream and speaks as a voice out of heaven. . . . .

Winds out of heaven, wind under the eaves;  
wind in the wheat; wind in the grass, roll-over,  
roll-over, roll-over; wind from the bush with  
the sun hot on the trees, the bee in the blossom,

the wattle and honey-suckle throwing out perfumes no other land knows; wind among the barley stalks, the stubble and the rustling corn; winds of history blowing down the ages. . . . Are we not all Rab Tamson's bairns. England, my England? But oh, for the Highlands, the Highland hearts, and the Highland eyes! Are we not all Rab Tamson's bairns? Stand by me, Michael, whether you be Michael Joseph Patrick, or plain Paddy; you, too, belong; you, too, listen to the winds howling through chimneys of history where once stood home and byre! You, too, have played pipes and written songs on wind; have drunken spells and sung; have slept and heard the voices of the Ancient Ones. Not all the glory belongs to Greece, not all the Gods to Olympus. . . .

And when Rab Tamson blows the candle out, we all sleep under the same blanket. Ah! even these menacing ones. And there the grass covers us, the wind blows over us. Sometimes, even, one remembers us, keeping our names in silence; keeping remembrance holy by silence.

## CHAPTER XI

### PLOVERS IN THE WHEAT

**L**ONG long ago a tall pine stood in the midst of a field where wheat in the head faced God and sang His praises in songs that were tunes of the wind.

Beautiful were the songs. They made sounds like the rubbings of a myriad tiny hands, of young faces, and children's cheeks just touching and passing; like soft fingers on silk, and the fluttering of wind in the edges of flags; like small spurts of flame in pine wood, and little dust flung softly on many windows; like milk falling into a pail, and the rustle of people moving at prayer; like the sea rippling over the sand, and the rising of birds from the water. . . . .

Wind on the wheat! . . . . The little breezes took the songs and carried them far, planting them in hearts that, remembering, thought of God in remembering, and wept in nostalgias wide as all life; wider, it may be, than heaven, for they may have gone right back even to Him in Whom are all beginnings and the longing of

all endings. And when the wheat was gone there was the army of the stubble; stubble that smelt so sweet, yet was sharp and scythe-like to the bare feet of a child; stubble that still held sap and loved the earth with its roots. The pine looked down on it all, and on the plover's nest in the scarcely covered furrow. There was a child there. She was thin, and quick; she ran with fear, yet held to her task with the courage of intent. Imaginative, she saw all things alive; she stepped over the ants, she lifted the wounded grasshoppers. The earth belonged to the defenceless things, to the things that were houseless. She, not they, was interloper. God made the world, and into that world, ready peopled with its kind, came man, a trespasser.

Scarcely seven years old, she tingled to every sound and scent, to the curve of the shining stems of the stubble, the green deeps of the pine, the darkness of its shadows on the parched earth, the red of the clod, the slope of a furrow. And because she was sensitive fear held her even as beauty.

Thin to emaciation, her feet flew as a plover swooped. "*Hannah Lammond's child! Hannah Lammond's child!*" . . . . The words came like thunder in memory. And again the

swooping plover passed, lower, and nearer. She saw the Scottish reapers where they stood and shouted; almost she saw the mother climb. Should she turn back from the spur of the plover for fear? Fear sprang in her bones, her heart closed as in a vice. "*Hannah Lammond's child. . . .*" and a whole world looking on! But here, she was but one alone in the midst of an endless field, half-way passed, half-way to go, and the last strokes of the plover cutting the straw of her hat, and none to cheer or to help.

Yet she went on; a bush child filled with lore of old world stories, she faltered not a word of her errand; but all night long in the night that followed she heard the cutting wing; all night long she cried on "Hannah Lammond's child," with an agony that not all the years could cover, not all the happenings of life blot out. O God, take fear from children's hearts, and give them peace!



## CHAPTER XII

### BY THE DARK HUT

THEY say that when the death lights the candles in a house, the bat flies low. Then the pious pray wistfully for all souls in pain, for all souls in dark places, for all in uncharted ways.

Yet if the soul is loosed from the flesh, and the flesh nothing. . . . Answer me this my unspoken question, and say, if you can, the thing you would!

Have you spoken? *I have not heard.*

Have you spoken? *The grave is very deep. I would not know if you had.*



## II

### THE GATE OF THE ROAD

*If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought  
by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let  
thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them  
- friend?*

*For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.*

*Morte d' Arthur (Tennyson).*

## CHAPTER I

### FURROW AND STAR

SHE was just a brown weather-beaten Irish woman whom fate had hit with a hard stick; but the brave wit and the quick wisdom of her people were hers. And the piety of race was hers, too. No mongrel race was ever pious, for it has but the odd strands of many trends in it, and never the grace of being able to disentangle and follow any one of them faithfully. The mixture of peoples kills religion as it kills race. The son may follow the father, and the daughter the mother, but the grandchild goes wandering. . . . .

The garden fence round the house was patched, and a bit of rope held the gate, but the path was swept though the morning was white in the frost. And as the door opened to my knock, the smell of boiling potatoes came out on the house-warm air to me. "It is not the cold breakfast she gives them," I thought, and smiled to myself in a mixture of recollection and feeling.

"Good morning," I said, as she stood at the door.

"Good morning," she answered, as she smiled from kind, age-old eyes back at me.

And from some whimsy, born of something of higher things in her look and of the early hour of frost, "It was a fine morning star, this morning!" I said, almost before I thought.

"And, glory be to God! a fine night before the star," she replied, just as quickly.

It was the soul that spoke. And I, who had never had much freedom to speak of such things, found the tongue I thought I had lost, and talked as I had never before done save to one good old priest. He was a full man, that one, every inch of him, and there was no way that you could come at him that he would not get you. And then, when you knew not which way to turn, the spirit of the man would come over you, so that you would see old things in new ways and new things in old ways, for he had all the hungers of a man, together with the greater hunger that goes beyond them all. Gainsay it who may, there is something in the proud blood of race, and Ireland is not called the Island of the Saints for nothing; for though this man's favourite tongue was of Spain, yet was Ireland his land, and her people

his. Long is he dead, long is the world 'the poorer for his loss. God rest you, Father Black, as you never rested in the fierce wild days of early Silvertown on the Barrier. And indeed, in that place, and in that time, two men stood out as faithful souls, even though their paths were parallel and not one; and memory still sets them together, the parish priest, Father Black, and the Anglican rector, Edward la Barte.

When I had refused the breakfast I was asked to share (and with what a fine and free hospitality), when I had paid for the bread I had come to ask for, and had gotten a drop of milk into the bargain, I turned for the road.

"God be good to you," said the woman, in parting.

"And to you," I said, thinking, as I went, how the goodness of God expresses itself in many and strange ways, and how sometimes the best blossom grows on what, at first sight, looks most the thorn. Aye, and that goodness is often about us only waiting to be picked up, but not everyone has the hand to lift it, nor the back that will stoop for it. Perhaps man's eyes are so newly turned to heaven that he forgets, in his newness, to look down and see where the glory falls among the homely things

of earth. It is the sun that blinds, and not the sunlight on hill and furrow.

Talking of furrows, I am reminded again of one that I once saw set out on the way to Bungonia. It was black and red and silver, with a fine threading of sand that came out at times like a silken sheen, or as a patch all along its length where the furrows lay flat on the slope: St. Patrick's own colour on the head of Brian Boru, and with something of the Polthogue added. It was in a wee piece of fat land on the edge of a creek; and the small that it was, yet, with a little cot for shelter, it would keep a peaceable man all the days of his life and give him a good knowledge of spiders at the end. And if you should ask why such a man in such a place would be knowing about spiders, I will tell you. For one thing a man would have to get up early to work it; for another, alone at the dawn with God, how could he but wonder at the things he would see? The loss of the world, to-day, is the wonder which the living awakes in the living; the recognition of things that no man's accounting can account for. For who questions at the things a man can make? Great as a pavement is, it never lifted man's eyes; and no



ball and socket shaped by hand, or turned in a lathe, was ever like the small round thing that is a baby's wrist, or the crooked leg of a butterfly!

It was a small boy who taught me first about spiders.

"Laddie," said I to the little fellow, barely eight years of age, round among the Mosman bushes at daylight, "what are you doing up at this hour? Why aren't you tucked up in your little warm bed waiting to be called before you can wake?"

"There's different spiders, early," he said quietly, and too busy to look up.

"Is that so?" I answered in surprise. And something went through me like a blame to think that I had been about all these years and had never found out that. "My years!" I cried in my heart, wistful for knowledge long lost because undiscovered, and thinking how the sheaves of this little fellow's harvest already lay about him.

He had a jam-tin with a lid, and two holes in the lid. "That's for air," he informed me as he poked in and out among the branches of a bush. "You get the green and yellow spiders early, and the grey ones," he told me in his baby talk. "You know," he went on,

"the ones the hornets put in their mud nests."

"I'm like the hornet," he continued, "for I get them. But I come before the hornet, when they think he is asleep, and they do not hide." He paused as he turned over a leaf. "They don't know about me," he said. And he smiled a wise little smile, like a man long versed in the ways of life, and in the customs of man's fellow-beings beyond that mysterious dividing wall which is so near and yet so undiscoverable.

I had been on my knees arranging my belongings as the little chap came up, and, in hearing the wisdom of an old head on such young shoulders, I forgot to rise, so that when I did move it was with difficulty, my knees having grown stiff. "'Tis prayer," I said to myself, as I eased them, for prayer is recognition of wonders and of wisdom as well as being the voice of petition. "'Tis prayer," again said I, "and God bless the prayer, and help me to make it praise!" For I thought of all the things at a man's hand and under his feet, and of the closed eyes with which he goes about and never sees them.

And that is how it was that, when I looked at that small rich field by the turn of the road, and the man with his two horses and plough

in the middle of it, I saw, in a flash as it were, the misty dawns, and the grey evenings, and, in the twilights, a small boy, child of a long line of entomological ancestors, carrying out a bias given, who knows how, a hundred years before.

As for the man who owned the place, it was a place to him and nothing more. But, for me, I could have loved everything about it; the rich loam, the smell of the turning furrow, the upcast yams which the children eat, and the wriggling worms for the furrow-following birds. As I looked at the horses I seemed to smell the warm sweat on their backs and hear the chink of the chains, and to feel the long forelock and the soft nose under my hand. I could see the shine of the sun on the hard hoofs, and the fringing hair glisten about them; I could feel the swingle-bars which shone grey in the light, and the ring and hook at the end, hot to the touch. Morning would come, and the horses would neigh for their feed; evening, and the harness would fall from their backs, hames and collars and chains all in a heap; and as I picked them up to hang them on their peg in the shed, Punch and Dobbin would turn to the creek. . . .

Am I a wanderer? Ah! not in the heart, not

in the heart! Only the feet have wandered. Ever the heart comes home to the dream and the thought and the wonderful things so common, so cheap, and so close to hand.

They say that nature takes on colour as camouflage from enemies. Nature's chief camouflage is shape and stillness. No wasp ever took the green of a spider for the green of the grass! But rolled up like a ball, flat on the earth instead of lifted in the air on legs, the spider is partially hidden in stillness and change of form. This is the intentional camouflage of life individual, and not of nature in the mass. It is the camouflage of intellect; and a child adopts it, standing Indian-still in the dusk, playing at Hidey-whoop!

Colour no doubt has its part. But colour is the accident of survival, and is unintentional. It is the child of chance; and chance is life's blind epileptic son from whom come genius and folly—one as chancey as the other.

As to spiders. . . . At daylight the world that loves the dew comes out. A whole population floods the earth, and creeps over it like a river, or a sea, or tiny feet. It is so soft, this dawn population, so soft and so small, that it surely is an innocent world: the snake

and the fox, the dingo and the bat have gone to their dens and their holes; the hawk and the eagle have not yet awakened. The podgy black spider still dreams on in his blanket of web under the dusty beam, for the fly that is his breakfast and rising-bell is yet asleep. With breakfast *after* the bell, who would rise before it?

Wisdom? True; but what is wisdom? The snail carries his house on his back; and the spider finds his on a twig, in a curled leaf, or under a log. I carry my swag like a snail, and find shelter like a spider and the ant. The man with the sweet-smelling land of loam follows the tail of a plough. . . . .

. . . . Why does a man sweat for the things he does not need? Ah! it is all a web, and life is the spinner, with man for the thread. There is nothing simple or single save death. There only do we stand at the gate and enter in alone.

As for me, what have I gathered, for all my wandering but a storing of recollections? An easy gathering, lifted as the wind lifts leaves and scents! It is the man who sweats that makes the magnifying glass and the telescope, it is he that shivers who measures the stars. Of us others, when I am dead what do I leave?

I am dead; I am gone. Earth bears no mark of me save a little ash where I, camp-fire, have been for an hour; life has no place of memory of me, not even of all that I felt in wonder. But the man with the plough, ignorant, blind and unfeeling, he goes, and his furrow is left on the earth; the seed which he planted grows and lives on, child of his hand, seeding and re-seeding, and keeping the world alive forever.

## CHAPTER II

### IN THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS

**A**S three of us, newly off the road, sat talking by the fire, the thought came of how the original things of life are brought again to use, however lost they may have seemed. Indoors by a mixed fire we rested, the coal glowing on the wood, the wood under the coal, as sociably in the warmth talk ran upon invention and discovery. Thought hovering from mind to mind, and directed by what the eye brought to the mind, one of us spoke of the aniline dyes from coal, and another of its medical drugs and trade essences, and of what these things mean to life and nationhood. That dead and buried world of the dinosaur and the brontosaur was a place of strong essences and odours. In it grew every herb and tree, and every creeper that fathered the forests and gardens of to-day. Life does not vary; only the form which it takes.

The cooling of the earth caused crumples, just as an opened oven door makes wrinkles on

the top of a cake. And in the spongy earth-cake of creation, in that crumpling, the great waters rushed in upon new valleys and submerged the tall trees and all that in them was. Further crumpling and settling locked the walls of the valleys together; it strained and drove out the streaming waters, and, closing in, draining and drying, in the heat of the then world it slowly cooked-in bone of fish and bird, sap and essence of tree, gas and gum, just as is done to-day in a charcoal-burner's pit. Only, in that period, oceans untellable damped the pit of Chaos and Nox, where to-day man sprinkles with a bucket.

But what Eye, what fearful Hand watched and tended, what mighty Charcoal-Burner laid on the covering earth?

Chance?

What made chance?

Like the essence and the scent which, child of the green thing, returns through the laboratory and is misnamed and miscalled mechanical and mineral, or of the earth earthy, so, after the material years, comes back to the soul of the world, and to the soul of wandering and individual man, the voice of the spirit. The bigotry of antagonism dies (for not all bigots



are of the Church and the creed), and the child comes home to the re-awakened scents of forgotten Olivet and the sigh of winds in far Gethsemane. The world cleanses itself of the mud that covered it, and in the laboratories of the spiritual the essences of faith break forth once more.

In the black cloud of war men lost God, lost belief, lost the moral sense. Only were left the fear, the courage, and the animal fellowship of the pagan and the beast. In the crumpling of the world's understandings, of its standards and covenants, the green forests of life and its usages were broken down; the ooze and the mud of evil ran over everything. In the valleys of the dead the graves were packed, and the flesh rotted as the leaves of a tree. Yet even there were the Eye and the Hand; even there the Charcoal-Burner, heaping the earth for the purging of the unclean, for the sweetening and conserving of the good.

Last night in the Anglican Cathedral I heard a man preach, not toleration, but understanding. For though he used not these words, yet in the end they held all his meaning, even though, as an orthodox churchman defending the future of an orthodox Church, he knew it not.

Sometimes it is as necessary for a Church to use a laboratory as for the chemist of the world. For what, after all, is a laboratory but a place of understandings? A place where, out of changed appearances, out of the accretions of ages, that which was first of the living sap is re-drawn again?

So it may be that the blood of the martyrs comes forth to us once more in the purple robes and the scarlet gowns of those who seek truth; and that the bare feet of the Apostles and the Communities of poverty of the Saints walk with those who give up all for the spirit. Abroad, to-day, drawing the indestructible from that which was submerged, these, the forever young in their dream, surely shall again give youth to its best, and the world come back to its conscience.

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. . . . ." The first kindling fire was the lightning that flashed, man knew not whence, and went, man knew not whither. Like thought intuitional, father and mother of faith, it came, none knew how. Yet somewhere, somehow, just as spiritual revelation flings itself through a soul, it flung itself upon a tree, and fire which lit the world and drove

the world, comforted and warmed the world, became a thing of purposed being. From the burning tree man took a splinter. In like manner, holder of but a splinter of spiritual knowledge, came the first seer and giver of a newer and a greater light.

From man's first tree-splinter came the fiery cross, even that of the Highlands, the hearth-fire of the first family, and the home. Where there are no fires, there are no homes. Where there is no fire of the spirit, there are no altars. The fire of spirit means sacrifice. The Brotherhoods, the Fraternities, are sacrificial—who knows with what suffering and through what pain! Yet in the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. . . .

But in what, and where, is the Church? You will find something of it where a man beats on a drum at a street corner and faith lives on the charity of pence poured in; you will find it where the mild face of Wesley left its benediction; in the strung hearts of a fierce congregation chanting the praises of the Lord in the wild rhythm of the metrical psalms; in a thousand little conventicles whose naming holds in truth but One Name; in places where tall candles burn, and the incense offered is part of an uttered Word; where High Churchmen, and

Low, pray in simple trust. But perhaps most of all, you will find it in the hearts and lives of those in the Communities of Poverty, in whose tender hands of service you may stoop and kiss the Wounded Feet. And here truly is the blood of the martyrs the seed of the Church.

## CHAPTER III

### ROADS OF REMEMBRANCE

**T**HERE are some people for whom a road never lived. To them it is nothing but a dull dead place of ruts, upon an equally dull dead earth. "Bad for cars!" they say; and that ends their chapter and their knowledge. People of that kind have no conception of how deep a love a man can have for that which is his only house and land, and what a full book and a friend it can be. They see nothing in such, no matter what they tell. All they ever know of the mighty arteries of traffic flung over the great world is "Tar" . . . . "Macadam" . . . . "Bumps" . . . . "Jolts"; and their one connection with these wonderways of earth is a rubber tyre—that and no more. Yet what finer friend can a man have than that which, like a brother, takes him home? And as to books! . . . . Give a man a road, and he has a library which neither comes to an end nor grows cheap and common.

I know roads. History lies written in them for those who can read. There is a road which,

old and straight, runs on through the bush beside Bungonia. One end of it leads to Melbourne, the other rests in Sydney. Men made that road in the darker years of this land. It heard the swing of the lash, and the sighs of the broken. It was cemented with the blood and tears of men. The page is black. Let us leave it.

Yet this we might tell: This one was once the great eastern highway of Australia, made when Australia had but one capital, Sydney, and only a settlement where the great city of Melbourne now stands. The intention at that time was that the central town in Argyle should be where to-day we have the kindly little village of Bungonia. But man was dispossessed of his power of command by the want of a river. For neither city nor stock was there water on the plan, and none on the earth claimed by the plan; so that unofficial maker of towns, the common man, settled the fate which created Goulburn. The surveyed line went unofficially on, and the town grew miles away by the Mulwarree and the Wollondilly. And to it there came not only the foot traveller and the cantering hack, but cart and dray, waggon and team. . . . and the Iron Horse at the end. Yesterday I saw an aeroplanist

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rise from his landing by the river, and, Roadman of the Air, sail over the city.

They name the aeroplane as they name the old bullock waggons. But what a difference in the meaning! In the one it is the maker, or the make. In the other, fancy, recollection, and romance wrote out their signatures. *The Prairie Flower*: ah, Rosalie, who sings you now? *The Jolly Boy*, and probably its owner was a Presbyterian; *The Red Rose*: with the paint burned to a faded brick colour; *The Luck*, and the luck went out when the pleuro struck the bullocks, *Juanita*, *Geranium*, *Casabianca*: how many *Casabiancas* have I seen! *White Rose*: up to the hub in mud, with a rough corduroy and levering poles under the wheels to get her out. And scattered among these were *Elizabeth*, *Jane*, and *Susan*, *Eliza*, and *Mary Ellen*—homely names, homely people, homely days—now all gone from the road.

And the names of the bullocks. . . . There was one team I knew in which there were Knox and Calvin; Knox a big ball-faced red, and Calvin, compact, dour and dark. Polers these; with Wesley and Cranmer in the middle, and Roman and Peter in the lead. Some reader, some humorist, that teamster, surely! And another team was Nelson and Wellington,

Napoleon and Blucher, Washington and Cornwallis. Only for brevity of language the last two were usually "Wash" and "Corney."

*"Come up, Path-finder! Gee, Black-feet!"*  
. . . . Did you ever read Fenimore Cooper when you were a boy? Did you ever stand, legs apart, eyes blazing, and feel like Jove as you watched Jupiter and Orion stumble slathering in a bog?

Great Parkes is dead, and no one will ever call either the off-side or the near-side leader after him again, for the teams of his day are gone. It seems rather a pity. But in memory one still hears the far-off "clock" of the bow-yokes, the chink of the bar-chains, and the steady, plodding steps of Parkes and Robertson, Hay and Buchanan—I forget the rest, except to remember that, in moments of affection, Buchanan was Davy. *Davy . . . . Davy . . . .* Yes, and the next two were Affleck and (Jack) Want. These were the team when empty, with the "spares" straggling along behind at their own pace. The seven-span team was named right through, but not all names remain in recollection. Yet every bullock knew his own call-up, and his own stand, so that he would horn away another who answered or came usurping, and would sulk all



day if yoked away from his own place and mate.

Among the roads which so many feet have travelled there was that which Louisa Lawson trod, the road to Grenfell all among the mullock heaps, where the diggers looked upon the few good women among them as only a little less than angels, and stood by the other poor kind with their fists even if they talked about them with their tongues. And fancy sees, to this day, the heavy red-fringed silken sash (seven pounds in weight the good ones, especially if the fringe were of silver), the "white moles," the top-boots, the cabbage-tree hat, string under chin and nose, of the men who faced the wilderness. And not only the wilderness, but the unknown; not only the unknown, but the supernatural. For in those days men wore amulets; said prayers and feared God; saw ghosts and believed in "haunts"; regarded witchcraft as fact, and hoped the devil would not get them in the dark of night. I well remember a man who carried a hare's foot—it kept away evil; and another who had a caul, so that, as he travelled the land, the sea would not get him. Strange things these to the eyes of a child! And some

wore this and some wore that on arms or neck, feeling protection and comfort in the touch of the charm. A motley world to look back upon, my brothers, yet it is only half a full man's life away!

The road that took the mother out brought the son back; the boy in whose quick mind the bitterness of the woman's shadowed life leapt up and caught the sun, and sweetened in the light. Now the mother has gone the long road, and the son grown grey with the years is gone. . . . He, too, travelled strange roads.

There was another road, which ran to the Bland. It went through black belar and rotten earth. Wheels sank on an apparently sound crust, which broke through as the spewy earth oozed up. The world was a whirl of mosquitoes in that year of eighteen hundred and seventy; maddened horses lost their hair as the result of bites, and bounded like India-rubber monsters in agony, or crept, sniffing and starting, up to any camp-fire for the relief of its trailing smoke.

At the end of that road stood the old house of Morangorell and the Macgregors of the open hand. There came Carlo Marina in his red Garibaldian shirt and long boots; short, stocky, and brown as his own Italy. There the

last of the hereditary Counts of Chefourieux came as tutor to the boys, loved the daughter of the house, and went, a wanderer over the earth, because her father frowned. For in those days daughters were fathers' property, and fathers suffered no interference with their notions of authority.

Carlo Marina is no more, the Ffrenches are gone, Chefourieux died in exile, and the historic château, one of the oldest in France, fell to strangers. The Macgregors, the Caldwells, the Pawseys, the Rosses, the Burritts, the Rutherfords, the Regans, the McCallums, and so many others of that day, are scattered like leaves in the sere. But the road remains, and with it the bright brave record of history. And on still nights one can see it wind away, and hear upon it the soft sound of passing shadowy feet; old memories, old affections, long regrets.

Again, long ago there was another road, one that led to Lambing Flat. The mullock heaps again stand clear, with the white sun shining on grey box, and on grass blown in waves by light winds. The sickle-shaped seeds bowl along in every movement of air, gather into fluffy balls full of space, catch on the root of a tree, on a heap of earth, on a clod, and then

scatter and gather again. Soon earth will hold them by the barbed arrow-point,. . . . This road, too, ran in and out among the dry mullock heaps, and then it stopped at a humpy. The humpy was of bark—all bark, wall, roof, door, and chimney. The chimney-gutter was of bark, and, when it rained, the water ran cheerfully out at both ends.

Inside the hut the floor was so clean that you felt you had never seen the like of it before. Earth, just earth, thrown in from the short handled spade or the diggers' shovel; damped, trodden down, worn smooth with much mopping and the soft hustle of feet. A table set in the middle of the hut had its legs of pointed saplings driven into the floor. Its top was of bark, inner side up, rough side down. The bark fireplace was pugged all round a foot thick, to give safety from fire and to provide a ledge for a few tins and cooking utensils to stand on. Whitewash covered everything. In the midst of its snow-like field the fire burned, and a billy hung black against the white, as it boiled for the tea. Sweet and clean was the hut, with about it the oddness, in that place, of an air of home.

On one of the round blocks which served as seats, a fat woman sat. Her hair was black

and glossy ; her deep-set, narrow eyes gleamed and glinted like a sloe in a thicket into which the sun had just pointed a finger of light. Though she was ponderous there was no awkwardness, and her step was light upon the floor. She might have been a duchess in movement, and her speech was that of one who had been taught. At a time when every woman of pride and dignity wore a tiny black silk or alpaca apron, this woman wore the wide white covering apron of service.

"Why do you wear it?" she was asked.

"Because in it I remember the days when I was young and what I once belonged to," she answered.

It was the badge and the memorial of the trained ; for she had belonged in service to a house where the men wore cockades and silk stockings, and where no maid might be seen (except when sent for) even by the employing household.

The fat woman sat on her block like a billowing and overflowing pincushion, her black dress in folds about her like the habit of a *religieuse* ; and the other woman, who was my mother, sat on the only chair the place possessed.

"Take it yourself," she had said.

"The block best suits my weight," answered the other. "I only keep the chair because I like to know that I have one."

The two women looked at an album on the fat woman's knee.

"That," she said, as she turned over, and putting her finger on the portrait of a slender young man, "That is Sir Roger Tichborne. I was his nurse. His mother gave me a silver candlestick for my wedding, and that photograph when I was leaving to come to Australia." Perhaps she said "daguerreotype," for it is long since that day and memory is not always clear.

The years passed, and the fat woman in her black dress went with them. The hut went, and the red-shirted diggers, who not so long before had risen *en masse* and with pick and shovel had driven out the too encroaching and industrious Chinese, went too. Lambing-Flat became Young. The road cut deeper and deeper into the earth under the wheeling years. . . . .

Half a life-time later, a woman came to Sydney. She came to our house.

"Will you help me to right a wrong?" she said.

And then she told her story, and it was one

which took memory back to a fat woman with an album on her knee, and to a child who heard strange things and wondered. . . . "She showed me," said the later woman, "an album, and, as I looked through it, when I came to one portrait in it, I heard a voice at my shoulder say, 'That is Sir Roger Tichborne!' I turned, but there was no one there, and I thought it must have been fancy. But the voice came again, and I knew then what was before me. . . ."

The woman who had owned the album was perhaps the only person in Australia who could have told at a glance whether Arthur Orton was Tichborne or not; the only one who could have said whether the poor soul in Callan Park for long long years was Tichborne or not. And as I write these lines, here, beside the last road I shall take, the memory quickens of how in those far-off days she had said, when asked why she had not offered evidence for the trial, "I had come down in the world. I did not like to go back. I did not want them to know. Besides, it was so far." To-day, only those who remember the irregular sailings, the long hard voyages, and the slow team track through the bush and over the mountains to Sydney, can guess how far.

More there was, but memory did not suf-

ficiently take it up at the time; so it slipped away and is gone, except for a nod which she gave unobtrusively toward a sombre silent man, and a lowered whisper which told a whole story: "He is good to me; but he cannot write his own name, and I have to read everything to him."

In Sydney the claim for Creswell was twice opened up and inquired into. But the Tichborne case was dead, and a settled heir reigned by order of a verdict and the law of usage. The older road was closed; a new one could not be opened up. There was even no right-of-way. . . . Not in our time at least. But in that other world, whither all go, and where all lie equal, there shall be neither righting nor wronging, for there all things hurtful shall have end; even, it may be, remembrance itself.

Yesterday I laid down the pen with which I wrote, sitting under the westering sun, and looked out over the hills. The wind swept cold across to Bungendore, and an inner voice said, "Snow at Taralga or Crookwell, surely!" A picture of the mighty Horn with its everlasting snows, and of the iron slopes of Tierra del Fuego came to mind. And, as I looked



abroad over the great expanse of plain toward where the Gourock and the Cullarin rise, bleak and blue in distance, I thought of how Drake had taken the round sea-road of the world in the *Golden Hind*, had laid up at Punta Arenas in the mouth of Magellan's Strait, and had left his name in remembrance there; "of Cortez and 'all his men silent upon a peak in Darien'; of Nuñez Balboa struck dumb at sight of the Pacific endlessly laving the world; of Columbus, the bold Genoese, and his little convoy, cockle-shells floating like thistle-down on unknown seas, and boldly seeking adventure; of Vasco di Gama, the lion-hearted; of De Quiros and Torres—Spaniard, Italian, and Portuguese. Ah! and of all the bold brave men of Devon with their root of the ancient Celtic in them, and, by it, blood-brothers of the venturing Latin!

Men said, in the discovery of Australia, that the world was conquered, for the last sea was measured and named, the mountains broken down, the deserts become roads. The crusades of adventure were over; the earth, they said, was a shaken out sock, and there was nothing new. Discovery had the world netted up in boundaries, and had set corner posts to that which had been unlimited. It

was all marked in little squares on the map, and daylight and dark were as one in the candle man carried in his lantern.

And as I sat and thought, seeing the pampa in the plain and the plain as pampa, a slender ruffle of dust broke up in the distance. As it rose and fell, coming nearer, a horseman rode up.

"'Day," he said.

"'Day," said I.

"Hawker is dead," he said.

Am I ashamed to say that my eyes knew tears? First, like Balboa; first, like Drake; first, like Columbus! Into the unknown sea of the air he had gone, and had sighted more than Darien could show, or Alp, or Andean height, or frozen Horn!

Hawker is dead, the man who knew no fear; dead, not as a sluggard in bed, but as a King: flaming out of the heights into which he carried his light as a star.

The old world was a world of land and sea; but the sun sets not on the splendour of the new!

Hawker is dead. . . . That lonely sailor in Atlantean airs, no light below to guide, no land on which to rest. As a dove on the waters he flew. Now he is dead. Young did

he go from us; youth was his part. Now he is dead; Hawker the bird-man, first among those who went daring the ocean! The sky heard his wings, and the waves looked up at his flight. Over the sea fell his shadow, gigantic and strange. "What bird is this?" cried Ocean. And the winds answered, "It is the Antipodean. It is Hawker, the Australian!" And now he is dead.

Fold the wing over him and let him lie; but, Mother Australia! not in a stranger land. Bring him again to his home, to his place in the South; there to lie warm in his own remembering earth. . . . Bring him again to her breast, Hawker, her son who is dead. Young he did go from us; youth was his part: now he is dead.\*

Note.—This was written before the lamented death of that world-pioneer, Sir Ross Smith, of whom it is doubly true.

\*Died "on flight," 1921.

## CHAPTER IV

### ON THE WAY TO BUNGENDORE

**W**HEN the rain comes down in torrents and the roads are very wet, when the mud clings to the boot-heel and the water soaks through the soles, then do I think of quiet kitchens with wide fire-places and an ingle-nook on either side with a big log fire between. I have stood in many such while the kettle steamed, and I steamed, while time ticked on in a silence which was a benediction, and a busy housewife rolled floury scones on a floury board. And I have wondered why it is that the thought of a comely woman (and always such a woman is comely), skirt turned up in housewifely care, bare arms, floured hands rolling and kneading the white and supple dough, sets a man's heart longing back, or yearning wistfully forward.

Dreams of a hand on a loaf, a heart to love; bread and cheese and kisses: are these all of a man's life? its crown and its completion? Love and compassion, strength and protection, patience and sympathy: eternity bred in a

race, futurity born of a child: link upon link, chain upon chain: family, nation, and race: and then the grave! Is this all?

Yesterday it rained; sweet, soft, refreshing rain. I had a good hat well rammed down on my head, and boots newly soled by my old friend the Goulburn shoemaker. "Sure of the leather, John," said I when I saw them, "rain won't get through?"

"If you give them a rub now and then with that there dubbin I'm giving you, I'll guarantee you'll get no water till it comes through the holes!" said he. And I was sure it was true, for John never lied.

As the rain came down I turned my face up to it; the multitudinous needles of the clouds struck and became tiny drops, oh, so keen and fresh! And the drops joined and became beads, beads that ran down and touched tenderly as the tips of baby fingers on the toughened skin of a man's weather-beaten face. There was no wind, only an indescribable quickness of the air, a smell of rain on dust, of warm grass newly sprinkled and drenched, of eucalyptus drips from aromatic trees, and, above it all, the grey smell of the old grey fence along the road.

By the time I got to the landmark of the Bungendore Road, the post that saved poor Johnny Gilbert the bushranger from being shot by one of the Faithfulls, the track ran in gutters, and the first smartness of adventure was over. I was no longer a king or a gladiator facing combat in pride of certain victory.

As I stepped out, I thought with some heaviness of heart of the long stretch to a timbered patch. And even then shelter would be precarious, for barbed-wire and title-deeds fence off the road and the man who loves the road from the trees that God gave him. Still hope sprang, for the rain that sent me under the trees might keep the man of might, or his hired henchman, indoors.

The first timber was too far off, and the next too sparse. But I plodded on with a wistful thought of the sheltering roof of the old roadside Gibson House, but also with a shudder at the thought of the squalor of the floors, the broken and cobwebbed windows, and the mixed company, crawling and travelling, one might meet there. No! Godsend as it was to so many of the sad army of the road, give me, instead, the lee-side of a tree, and a few boughs leaned up to make a gunyah.

When I had found a camping place and boiled me a pot of tea—for in a little dip ran a thin stream which the rain had hardly mud-died—when I had fixed my friendly old swag in the one dry spot, so that I could sit comfortably on it and read and smoke, I took stock of the horizon, and decided that no intruding overlord of broad lands would come to bother me that day. On all the other days of the week, or of the year, indeed, he might come, and I would not care, for I should be away!

Rest is God's blessing to sinful man, and who but the Road-Men really know it? "God bless the man who first invented sleep," says Sancho Panza. Aye, sleep, too, is good. But a book to read, a pipe and a fire-stick handy, a tree for back, and quiet to the horizon, is more than sleep. It is that kind of rest which restores even the weary soul.

I have loved many books, ever since, as a small struggling wanderer among long words, I had stumbled, impelled by I knew not what, through *The Vision of Mirza*. The charm of style and the love of words still holds me, though many long miles had to be stepped and many years pass before I knew, in detail, what it was that held, and why.

A word is a precious possession. To those who know how to hold it to the mind's eye and turn it to the light, long vistas lie in it, and fields of space and colour. Artifice is hidden in a word, and the man who puts it to new meanings is yet another "Potter," shaping great things to simple uses or simple things to new and strange adventurings. Sometimes, indeed, he is the maker of a shrine to which later years bring grateful offerings.

In a word lies history, the long vision of man's generations, the green savannahs of his peace, the red fields of his strife. In a word lies all that a man knows of wife and child, except what he finds when his own lips kiss or his own hand holds.

*Wife!* . . . . who said it? *Father!* . . . . Out of the darkness, out of the world, ah, even out of Eternity and the eternal, comes that word! Over what seas of loneliness, what strange stretches of imagination, what tremors of hope and fear! "O, Absalom, my son, my son." . . . . "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept . . . . but now he is dead. . . . ." Are these words dead things, or are they the ever-living voice of life? How many generations of men are gone, yet these still remain to rend the human heart! "I



shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Oh, immortal hope; eternal grief! Shall one man, one life, say all that this cry, uttered on some day, in some hour, by all the fathers of the world, has come to say: has said? One man? Eternities of men. One generation? All generations. One people? . . . . *Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani.* . . . . Even there! Even there!

## CHAPTER V.

### IN THE STREET OF PETER AND PAUL.

“**A**ND now,” said Renée de Gys, as he drew Sword Straight from its loop, lifted it in salute, and kissed the cross of the hilt with his bearded lips, “since we go to fight our last fight I commend my soul to the Virgin.”

On the eastern horizon lies the lightest cloud, straight as a sword and clean; silver it floats in the ether. As but now I watched it in the translucence of unmarked heaven, from some far sea of memory, unheralded as that distant flake of wonder, came floating up a seeming picture of the words of de Gys. And with it rose another page, in which the letters stand out as though alive; words at whose coming the mind, as though in the unlatching of long locked springs, widens in sudden stretch, and sees might, majesty, and power, world-wide, age-long, one and indivisible.

“The Mother of all churches is very wise; to her, East and West, saint and sinner, are one: always her ministers wait, loins girded,

for the call. Two nuns watched out the night with Mélie; and when sunrise dimmed the tall candles about her curtained bed, Phu-nan crept in on noiseless feet to announce that Mother Church was prepared. Brown men, converts of Mother Church, carried away the husk of Mélie; and the Jesuits said masses for her soul in their cool chapel among the odorous Malayan trees. Red frangipane and redder hibiscus decked the white headstone, whereon brown fingers carved the legend 'Mélie; wife of Commandant Renée de Gys. Pray for her.' Verily the Mother of all Churches, who forgave that white untruth, is very wise."\*

Time has beaten upon her; and she abides. Empires and kings have tried to stay her, and it is they who are no more; their kingdoms are dust, their very dynasties are gone. Invention, imagination, convergences, divergences, all the armies of historied years and of moving chance, have flung on her the debris and the dust of their passing; and still she stands, yesterday, to-day, and forever the same: the Mother of all Churches. . . .

The silver of the little sword-like cloud is turned to rose: westward the sun is going

\*The Seeds of Enchantment, by Gilbert Frankau.

down the gates of heaven in chariots of fire. In the south, towers and pinnacles, dove-white and grey, are splashed with pink; gossamer veils and tongues of flame fly upward to the zenith; wonder upon wonder, passing every moment. Yet, greatest wonder of all is the invisible movement of change, imperceptibly altering form and hue at every moment.

Faint is the thin blue mist on the range beyond Governor's Hill, faint on the Kookbundoons. Softly one tender, delicate reach of far reflected light falls on the cross of the Cathedral. . . . Passes the last pale gold that lingered low on the edge of a cloud. Then in the east, shining, serene, more beautiful than Virgins, comes the full round of the moon. Like a shield of silver-gold, she hangs above the hills, space for her stair. How many times has the world turned, since this wonder was drawn, like another Eve, from the side of earth, her Adam?

O Moon in the heavens! how have the years gone since first thou didst look down out of thy peace upon the quiet of this new untrod-den world! Strange were the cries that pierced, but did not break the rhythm of the stillness; stranger still were its silences.

. . . . Who shall sing the song of the moon, the song of the Lady of Night? Sun, moon, and stars. . . . Oh! Man-child of Earth, were all these made but for one life? The limitless, scattered abroad from the hand of the Maker just for an hour of thy sight?

In their little cities of quiet lie the dead; and still for the sleepers there the same moon sails on that lighted them from childhood; that rose above the wild and saw it changed; that saw the passing of the shadowy tribes. And the mind is stirred to think that in this land of hoof and fleece, of sheaf and stook, there was a time almost within the memory of living man, when to this, the hornless and hoofless land, came for the first time the ox, the horse, the sheep, and the first grain of corn! Think of the clattering and clicking hoofs of to-day, the illimitable stock roads, the furrowed lands; and then of that marvel, of the hour that heard the first bleat of a lamb!

We have uncovered the earth. Yet there was a time when, on these naked hills of Goulburn, of the Crookwell and Taralga, the forest stood dense, and only bare feet trod through it, feet that knew not even a moccasin. How mysterious these endless bare feet, one after one, one after one, and the quick

eye and the sudden hand! Families, hunting grounds, tribes! Now they are gone, and gone with them the bush that was their world.

So small is an axe, so slender the hand of man; yet the edge of the axe has eaten that which once knew no breach save when a wind-fire or the lightning struck and raged. This land of Australia was a whole wide continent, and in all its length and breadth there was not even one saw or one auger, one brick, or one shaped stone upon another. And yet the world was very old. Babylon had fallen, and Tadmor in the Wilderness. The silks of Tyre, the ships of Sidon, had come and gone, and had left their trail of romance and their elusive hues and scents in men's memories. Egypt, Greece, and Rome had written their centuries with pride, Europe had swollen to might, London had held men's eyes. Industry, invention, discovery, art: the world had teemed and hummed: had broken and spilled tools; yet, over the round of a hemisphere, this land stood apart. Within the folded doors of the virginal, she knew not the world. Then, in a night, in a day, the world held her.

Almost within the reach of one life the unchanging moon had looked down on the primeval, filling its hollows with light and its bush

with shadows; had heard the thudding flight of the kangaroo, and the light step of the little bandicoot. At the wane she had seen dawn and heard the kookaburra wake and fly. In waxing she had lightened the east, and made radiant the darkening night. In waxing and waning, she had heard the voice of the first white child in this land, had seen the first hearth-fire lit in the age-long hearthless.

Out of that first cry, and out of that first fire, rose Sydney and Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, and Perth; the long copper and steel and iron lines that run to the north and south, to the east and the west; the ships that sail, the dead in France, the crosses of Gallipoli; ah, and even all the little roads of Goulburn which I so much love. In sequence to that first voice and that first love came love and hate, friendship and war, bigotry and faith; and compassion, chief of the daughters of God.

. . . .Purple are the hills, purple the imminent west, rosy is the eastward arc in its aurora. Silver is the gold moon, moving vestal towards the zenith; Angelus is long since rung, Benediction said; quiet lies upon the hills, night upon the city.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. . . .” Strange that I should hear that to-day of all days: this day of death repeated twenty times! Was it plague that struck the City of the Wanderers, that ancient by-way of many peoples? Was it a curse? I do not know. I only know that men died, that women and children wept and died; and that those who were left went in and out and about, and wet the lips of the dying, and comforted them with such words as they could. And, in that band of helpers, there were those who were glad when a crucifix meant words long lost to memory, or hard for unaccustomed lips to say.

The symbol is the word. . . . “The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us. . . .” The Mother of all Churches is very wise. She who gave words in many and visible forms is very wise. When the stiffened tongue can no longer speak, and the dulled ears no longer hear, in her compassionate hand she holds the cross before the glazing eyes: last sight, last look of the dying. Ah! When the closed eyes see no more, lay it upon the lips, upon the lids, that last tremendous Word; on the heart, and in the folded hands. So shall remembrance live, and comfort follow even in death.



. . . . . He died in other arms than mine, the child of my heart; and the words they read over him sounded in my ears like thunder. Yet in the end peace came, for verily the Mother of all Churches is very wise, and I dream of a day when that which was dead shall live, and that which was dry run sap.

“What are these, that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. . . . . They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. . . . .”

Oh, the bleak hill-side of the heart! Yet even here, Beloved, shall that which was dead bud again in the blossom of His eternal hope.

## CHAPTER VI.

### INTERLUDE OF THE HUT

“**W**HAT would you be doing with a verse like that?” says he.

“I’d be leaving it,” says I.

“You wouldn’t alter it?” says he.

“How could you?” says I.

And so he left it as it was, for he was a wise man who was able to feel reasons not always given, and I could give no explanation why I thought as I did, at least, not then, for the knowledge had not yet come lettered-out to me.

In literature, there are people who have a *mana* for the smooth. They know only detail. The great, the broad, and the deep escape them, for they are preoccupied with ripples and do not see the tempests and horizons of ocean. Such people have no compelling compound under-rhythms. Sometime they are tuneless. When they write, they do it like a man polishing bits of brass or the outside of a horn. The shine is all on the surface of the brass, and the horn is dumb.

Words are the bugles of thought, the horn of feeling. Some put the mouthpiece to their lips, and the echoes wind away, away, and away, and come back again and sing in the ear. Others blow a harsh note of strange melody that haunts like an unspoken word or the unexplained look from the eyes of a soul. And some bring a note like one crying from a far distance and over many barriers; a mixed note, strange and constraining. After these came the mass, the polishers of brass.

And when that old Road-fellow, who at times makes me an Irishman through the tongue (and by that same token, of the pen!) as I am one through the Ancient Ones and the heart: when that fellow asked me would I be altering the boy's verse, I said "No!" For who can blow another man's note, or sing another man's song? Not I, for one; for the song is of the soul, or it is no song at all.

But many a one goes through long dumb years, because the burden of polish is laid upon him who would sing and in his singing find all his medium. "It is to be *my* polish, not yours!" says the conventional old world. And if an editor, or a critic, makes that world, why there you are! And, so, many never sing at all, because of the blight of a kitchen stan-

dard. . . . "Why didn't this one, or that one, take to the road, and write in his early years? Isn't the road always open?" they ask. It isn't always that the road is seen for looking at the stars. And if you put down the song and the talk of the stars, how will you get the singer on the road? You break the wing in its early flight; and no broken and fallen wing ever lifts as it did of old. By the time it is strong again the fetters of time are upon it, and the long battle and struggle of the world. . . .

*Interlude:* When I am old I shall build me a hermitage out in the wild. And there will shine the sun, and fall the rain, and the wind blow; and I shall be one with them. And there will come the birds, and the bright-eyed furry things, and the spider spin his gossamer web, and in the dew of morning the thrush wake me with his song. There will the stars light me to rest; there, under the moon, will the shadows lie black on the path, and the silver of her beams shine on the trees and on the grass.

I shall make me a fire of wood, and in it the leaves shall blaze woodland scents, the twigs crackle in the frost, and the sparks fly up

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like the thoughts of a man. The embers will glow like gold, and, falling apart, burn to a clean white ash. The floor shall be of earth, the tree give me a roof, the spring furnish my drink. I will make me a broom of the brush of the dogwood tree, tied round with a string and a stick thrust through for a handle. And the path to the door shall be clean, and the yard shall be clean, and the floor of the hut. There shall be a shelf for a plate and a nail for the pannikin; and above the fire I will put a cross-bar of wood, and a chain and three hooks. There will be a pot and an oven, and the pot shall have three legs and the oven a lid; and the camp-oven bread shall be sweeter than honey, and the meat of the pot make a man strong.

I shall build me a hermitage out in the wild, and be friends with my world of the wild and the free.

And when I am fain I will send out a word, and one shall come from the east, and one from the west; and out of the north shall another come, and one from the south; the dusk shall see one come, and the star another; and none will be too early, and none too late. We will look up at the stars and talk, and watch the moon and talk, hearing the whis-

pers of earth rise about us on the air, from the leaves, from the growing grass and the little flowers. The mountain will show us his mass at moonlight, the silver of the morning star shall be ours, and the light of dawn and the stillness of its hour. And there shall each one speak his soul in the fullness of peace.

I shall make me a hermitage out in the wild, and be friends with my kind. The scent of the bark of the roof and the walls shall be about us, and the peg of the door shall hang down by its string. For there will be no one to fear either in the coming of friends or in the going of strangers. Warm shall be the hut in the winter, and cool in the summer; and in spring I shall watch the first thrust of the grass as it breaks through the soil—Green-mantle coming up to spread his cloak upon the earth. Green are his spears and his flag; his army shall march to the east and the west; the south and the north shall know him. The tents of the grass shall cover the earth, green for the growing and glad in the going. The mushroom shall lift its pavilion out the dew, the buttercup come in a budding of brown and open its cup as a shield. Gold is the cup, and gold are the plates of the shield, as, like an army that stands in the grass, the flowrets

sway like waves in the wind, and move like a ripple of thought in the mind, multiple motion in one.

There in the grass will the orchid stand like a tall sentinel, throat to the sun, the sundew find her a place in the shade, and the box blossom call to the bee. And I shall be loosed from the street and the kerb, and from the lock on the door. . . .

I shall make me a hermitage out where the voice of the innocent living shall strike on the silences there. I shall make me a hermitage out in the wild.

## CHAPTER VII

AKAROON! AKAROON!

**O** BROTHERS of the Road, where are you now? Once we were a fair brave company. Now, when memory stirs, it is as though one entered a room where people sat and talked old things above the newly dead. For of all who set out together only so few (and the dead) remain. For change inevitable and unconquerable took some, and forgetfulness others. The years demanded their toll, and the need of locking a door with a key, after candles out and babes to bed, gathered in most.

Sometimes I pass by warm and lighted windows, a wayfarer in an outside world, and, looking in where the light streams forth, I wonder who sits by the fire, whose son puzzles out his sums at the table, whose little girl helps mother gather up the tea-things. She steps so lightly, that dear girl; so innocent are her eyes, so tender is her look. And one who trod the roads with me gave her and her sweetness to the world. Almost she seems



mine as I look; almost my hand seems on the curly head of the boy over whom she leans.

. . . . Mine, too; for I have loved all my human kind, and the fellowship of the heart is very wide.

One of that beloved olden company lives and looks over the sea at Vaucluse; one sits, grown grey with his University, in a Professor's chair; another flung his banner to the heavens and the Star of Australasia sings his name. (*Akaroon! Akaroon!*\* *my land of the Echoing Rock!*) So they go on; so they settled, one here, one there, and the roads know them no more. And there are the others, they who lie in the fields of France, and on the slopes of Gallipoli; in Belgium, in Africa, in the salt plains of the Patagonian and the Argentine Pampa; on the slopes of sea-washed Waverley and in the quiet of one small peaceful acre in New Zealand. All friends; all Brothers of the Road; all once fellow-travellers on long strange ways, answering the call of youth, shouting defiance to the warnings of the fearful. Adventure called, and his glow-worm light, now seen, and now unseen, drew like a beacon in the distance. Hardship fenced the way, loss lay at the end, but who

\*An aboriginal name.

cared? For only the onward march and the surmounted mattered. If death lay in the distance, well, let be, for death ends everything, even the worst, and the slowest death of all is not to have lived. For the rest, with sun for warmth and a tree for shade; with rain, sleet, and hail for good; with the heart for strength, the hand for another, one after one took the road; one after one they met and paused, spoke, and the goodly company was formed.

And was that, too, but chance?

May be; but something in the night speaks, and my heart awakes and cries, "Ah! was it not something deeper; something more!"

## CHAPTER VIII

### ON THE TRACK TO BRAIDWOOD

**A**S up and down the land peregrine I go, there are many who, because they hear of me as a reader of books, come to me with a line or two scrawled on paper to ask, "Is it any good?" hoping that promise may be found in it. And, whatever the entanglement or however poor the effort, I unravel the intent, never minding the trouble, for jewels are often found in unexpected places.

But the strangest thing of all was a woman's pincushion, a hussif, and a worn glove, in an empty hut on one of the old half-forgotten tracks to Braidwood. On the pincushion was fastened a piece of folded note-paper.

For a long time I stood and looked at the little group of things, a group though scattered, wondering if I had stumbled into a house of the living instead of into the deserted, and whether I should not turn and tip-toe out, seeing that I made neither tracks nor noise in leaving. I seemed to feel a presence. Yet there was no one there. The ash

in the fireplace was dead and matted under past raindrops down the wide chimney; dust lay on the table, and even on the bit of folded paper; the door swung half-open, half-shut; and where the wind had blown, it had brought in a strickle or two of grass and a few dead leaves.

Strange it seemed to me to see these things there, in a man's hut; for a man's hut it was, with its sapling bunk at one end and its rough table under the window. The window was bark with the usual boot-leather hinges grown brittle with long disuse. The cross-piece and hooks over the dead ashes were festooned in cobweb, and cobweb reached right across the back of the chimney. The shelf against the wall was empty, not even a disused tin being left. The only movable thing in the whole place was a man's broken green-hide boot-lace hanging on one of the two pegs in the side wall; that, and an old moth-eaten coat on the corner peg at the foot of the bunk.

I slipped off my swag, for conjecture could get nowhere, and, stepping up to the table, put out my hand to take up the things there. But it seemed again as if that unseen something hovered, and I drew back, feeling as though I had purposed an intrusion. I looked at the

articles so typical of a woman, and, turning, left them where they lay. When I had cleared out the ashes and lit a fire—for dusk was falling and a blaze was cheery in the quiet of that strange place—I set the door wide, opened the window, and, taking my billy, went out to look for water. I came on it under a little brink at the back of the hut. There had once been a clear track to it, but it had been so long unused that the grass on either side almost met over it. Yet the hollow of the path itself was still firm and smooth. In the gully I found a small rocky pool, out of which ran a thin stream; and as I dipped to it young frogs sprang in every direction. One small soft thing leapt and smacked me on the cheek, and then fell to the grass and the water. As I turned to the hut, a star shone clear in my face, very still, very bright. Above me the whole sky seemed luminously translucent; but under the trees it was shadowy dusk and strange. The feeling of damp air rising from dank earth shunned by all the warm things of life lay upon it, and the chill of evening struck upward into the flesh.

When I came round the corner of the hut the light of the fire shone out in long quivering rays, and the heart warmed in the sudden

homeliness of flame. Friendly as the tongue of a dog, of a dog all one's own in service and affection, it spoke prophecy of future comfort as it evoked from the unconscious storage of memory reminders of past fellowship. For, most of all things, is fire the friend of all wayfarers. There is a something in it that is not entirely due to warmth and service. It is the one anchored thing in the world of the moving and the movable. A man does not walk with it, he sits by it. And it is the sitting man who dreams and remembers.

When I came inside the door, the first thing I did was to look at the table. The things were still there. No ghost had stolen in and taken them, no hand had changed them from their order. As the billy boiled, and I busied myself with preparation for night, opening up the dilly bags for the tea and sugar and the bread and meat for supper, I glanced up at the articles from time to time, thinking and wondering what they meant in that empty and desolate place. More empty and more desolate, indeed, the place seemed for their being there.

Expectation lies in a man's heart, and he is a fool who too soon breaks in upon it. So I made tea, and then, lighting the candle-end I

am never without, I gently disengaged the paper from its pin in the pincushion and came back to the fire. I lit my pipe, put out the careful candle, and unfolded the little slip. It was written on in a woman's hand, and, as I opened it out, something beside me seemed to sigh. I looked round, but there was no one there. Only the firelight flickered on the floor.

Stories are written in the unwritten, and the halting and unfinished fragment I held in my hand I give as I found it, leaving everyone to make his own explanation out of it, and read his own meaning into it according to his capacity and liking. For interpretation of the obscure lies with the intimate springs of self, and not with the teller.

*"He stood like life on the open stair,  
Strength in his poise and pride in his air.  
Ah, when it comes that I must die,  
Let this great son of woman  
Lend me the strength of his strong right-hand  
As I go down to the nether strand;  
Let him hold me the lamp of his own deep faith,  
That in the dark I fear no scaith.  
Long, long ago I saw him stand  
Light on his head, in his eyes.  
I was a woman, he was a man:*

*Yet still, as ever since life began,  
A woman's pride is the son she bore.  
I was a woman, but he was more."*

That was all; disjointed, unfinished, and broken like that. Yet I swear to you that, as I read it, I felt as if an invisible presence stood by me, and one that could and would have explained had explanation been possible.

I folded up the slip in the same creases as I had found it in, and putting the pin through the hole again set it back in its place. But I could not thus put away thought. So after an hour I went out and looked up at the stars, marvelling at all the worlds they are, and of how they look down on man who peered at and about them, and who knew no more of them at the end of a thousand years, or of ten thousand years, than he did at the beginning. And I thought of the millions of eyes that had been lifted up, age after age, at these unchanging stars, eyes as multitudinous as the sands of earth's ocean, as the particles of the Milky Way. And wonder grew in my heart as to where they all were, and why they had existed at all! How could they come and then go out like snuffed candles if there was nothing behind them? Even a candle needs a maker; and how much more man, who is the candle-maker!



*As I go down to the nether strand . . . .*  
If a man go down to death, and all his life make  
no cry upward, does he drown in death like an  
animal? And does he who asks for light and  
walks by light, go up to light? Is it like that in  
death, which comes to all? Do we, even in the  
soul's last long cry, decide the end? A man  
cuts off his body's life in suicide. Is it possible  
that there is also suicide of the soul, as irre-  
trievable, as blind, as foolishly wilful, and as  
contrary to all law of continuity?

*Let him hold me the lamp of his own deep faith  
That in the dark I fear no scaith . . . .*

Let the stars make answer and the spirit of  
man reply.

I came indoors and sat down again, and, as  
the firelight leapt up and flickered, I saw that I  
still had a piece of paper in my fingers. I  
opened my hand and looked at it folded there.  
It should have seemed quite strange, but some-  
how I felt like one in a world where  
there were no mysteries and nothing out of the  
way. And as I looked, automatically I un-  
folded the sheet and read what was written  
there.

*"Friends! And the sky without a cloud.  
Friends! And from the heart  
Fallen the day's low care!  
Hark! In the trees a thrush,  
With only his voice to break on the hush  
Of the sweet and the scented air—  
Hush of the heart, hush of the soul,  
With beauty itself for the part and the whole!  
"Ah! As came the even,  
Wistfully at even,  
All in the sunset steven,  
Wistfully turned we then;  
Wistfully turned we home,  
Facing the road of men,  
Skirting a mottle of loam,  
Skirting the planted field  
Rich in its mellowing yield,  
Riding up where orchard keeps  
Clung about their rocky steeps,  
And down by the river of sedges  
Where clear the water dredges,  
And on where upland and lowland lay  
Gold at the end of a golden day!  
" . . . . Sister, sister, sister mine,  
Hold once more my hand!  
Was that the sky I saw? Hush!  
Comes once again the song of the thrush,  
And the road winds on, and on, and on. . . . .*

. . . . Nay! it is gone!

And I am alone in the dark,  
Like a lost boat out in the sea  
With never a light nor a mark  
To salvage me.

"Yet I remember!

What was it that I remember?

. . . . Was it the lonely grave  
On the little round hill,  
So quiet and still?

Ah! could I think of it, quiet and still,  
Where no bolt falls and no winds rave,  
Where only the young spring grasses wave,  
And buttercups bend and hover  
As, ever, the wind runs over and over!

Ah! was it yesterday? . . . .

Would that I might remember!

"Are the candles lit, sister, my sister?

Light them, then, and sit with me here.

This was her ribbon . . . . My dear! my dear!

And this was the rose whose scented breath

Lives in my heart and knows not death;

And this was the glove she wore;

And this . . . . Put them away!

"Never for me her tenderness,

Never for me her love;

Never for me her eyes' caress,

Never for me, my dove!

*Something there was that held between—  
What was it, O my sister?  
Hands, as it were, that held unseen,  
A voice that called ere love could speak,  
Love too sad to follow and seek—  
Ah! had I spoken!  
. . . . Never a word and never a token  
(Are the candles lit?)  
But only the dark and the night  
To sit in alone and remember it!"*

What did it mean? Was it the lonely cry of the soul to its own? Long, long I sat and looked at that in my hand, and it seemed as though I heard in it something that echoed backward and ever backward there in my heart. All night I sat thinking and dreaming, remembering the living things that are never dead. When I looked up it was day, the glove and its companion things lay on the table, the fire was out, and I had only my empty hands. . . .

## CHAPTER IX

### BUNGONIA AND THE LOOK-DOWN

**N**OT always do we walk, we of the road. Sometimes we ride. And in riding there was once a day we took at the Look Down, that mighty chasm where the gathering waters of the Shoalhaven cut their way toward the estuary and the sea. The drive is one of quiet and delicate change; a winding road, where the earth shows its variety in turpentines and wild cherry, wattles and giant mallee, swamp oak, white gum, white box, yellow box, iron bark, even stringy bark, and Black-Jack with his spear. Only Black-Jack is a grass and not a tree, for all his name. On the way out, like a picture in a quiet dream, Bungonia lies against the hillside, a tiny hackle of houses shining every day in the setting sun. The stars come out on still nights and look down upon it, fairy lanterns of distance that brighten when the frost stiffens the grass and the twigs crackle in the fire. "It is frosty to-night," say the fathers, as the sparks snap and fly. "The fairies are about," say the children, and wish

on the sparks in their upward flight as their elders do on falling stars.

Month by month the children see the moon cut low on the horizon her newly-shaped sickle of the sky, hang like a silver lamp in the mid-heavens as she grows, and burn golden over the hill as she rises at the full. And every hour of their lives they know the little church that stands above the cluster of dwellings, perhaps the oldest Catholic church out of Sydney.

Life spins its web of daily tasks, and spills its treasure of duties done about the neighbourly hearth-stones, where peace looks out of the windows and rests on the quiet door-steps. Within-doors love works out its destiny; on the hill-side the dead lie, sacredly held in the secret places of the earth.

Once, in the years long gone, I went the road with those I loved. Four of us; and a child. Scarcely life whispered, it was all so beautiful. No harsh sound, no jar broke on the air to mar its sweetness. The way wound in and out in light and shade. And only those who know and fear impenetrable and unresponding darkness can realize how beautiful the light! Ferns filled the hollow, birds flitted from bush to bush. The reed-warbler stirred in the thick of the dip, the tom-tit in

the stunted brush on its banks; the robin showed the rose of his breast, and the wagtail piped as he swung on a gate-post; a flock of parrots rose up at our side and held with us in parallel flight, a shawl of whirring colour, making speed as they went to wheel across our course. On a silver box a peeweeet clashed his wings as he called with plangent cries to his mate, and his mate answered him, crying and running through the grass. At a turn of the road a grey cuckoo-shrike threaded the air in flight, loping off in the distance from tree to tree, and a strayed apostle-bird balanced and ran, and flirted and ran again, one of the twelve. As we paused to open the gates magpies strutted and eyed us, bugling as they came; and once a sage old kookaburra, looking wisdom, sat watching us from the end of a broken limb. Golden-green was the wattle, Spring's offering to an earth which found it a button-hole. One hill-side was thick with it, one clearing a paradise of its loveliness. O Life, "and shall not loveliness be loved for ever?" For what have we in the world lovelier than this green tree of our native land!

In a little clearing where the road turned off and the metal became that friendly thing to tired hoof and foot, a bush track, we saw open-

air age in the field; an old man, healthy and hale, occupying himself in burning off. Miles of ring-barked timber stood stark and naked on the farther side of the road; a whole forest which had been laid waste that wool might grow and cattle feed. The years pass, but the trees come not again. In the ages to follow, unless man plants to renew what he has destroyed, there will come a day when, among stunted shrubs and scant rose-gardens, people will talk of the trees that once held this land much as the owner of sheep may talk to-day of the megatherium and the dinosaur, of things gigantic when measured by those which took their place. We watched the old man as we passed. He had the narrow hips of the bush that walks little; and, as he stooped, the rider's outward bend at the knee. The smoke of his fires rose very light, very blue, in the crisp air; the flame burned yellow in the sunlight, and the smell of the consuming wood came as the incense of the out-of-doors, the long-loved, and, to us, of this dear land, the homely and familiar.

And we? What were we that day? Children: children who took life by the hands, laughing at recollection as we found a dog-leg fence, grey with weather and age, that



zigzagged up a hill ; who called, each one first, at sight of a brush fence and a mellow fallow ; who counted the lengths of a chock-and-log and the falling panels of an outward-pitched, dingo-proof, stub fence which marked (so we said) an ancient fold. And here, in this place, romance looked up at us with faded eyes. For in this spot a house had once stood ; and someone, in the wild hour of the bush, had made a home.

Here woman and child had lived, and a man come at even. All day he had worked, this pioneer man, his axe sounding from dim distance. The maul had rung on the wedges ; the crash of a tree, softened to a sigh in the wide silence, had answered with its life the rip of the cross-cut saw. In the house, silent and alone, the woman had baked and swept ; had washed and made, had mended and patched. Blinds to the window she had none, for who but the trees could see ? Besides, in that far time of the pioneers, material was scarce, and long-cared-for clothing was all that one might ask. But the bed was white in a valence and frill, and a patchwork of dimity made a quilt for it. There was no sewing machine then ; there was only the woman's hand and a needle. Sometimes she had

dreamed, that woman there, and the child not yet had lain at peace because of her dream.

The wild briar grows where the hearth-stone stood, and a thicket of fleur-de-lis shows its flag at the edge of what was once a path. Perhaps the woman who planted that had brought with her, from her mother's garden, bachelor's buttons and parsley seed, and a root of thyme; perhaps a slip of geranium. . . . "Water them geraniums," wrote Henry Lawson, and in so doing told the tragic patience, and the longing pride and love of beauty of the woman of the bush. Ah! in remembrance let us say it again: "And shall not loveliness be loved forever?" For here the loveliness was life which trod its round and bore its burden and then went out uncrowned and unknown. But the garden—one such that I knew had marjoram, and a border of rosemary on one side and lavender on the other. Pinks grew in that garden, and an oleander burned in the midst. In November the tall white lilies stood like angels in the night to the child that knelt peering out in wonder, unable to sleep for the scents, for the moonlight on the flowers, for the flowers themselves, for beauty ineffable in a white world of night. There the hundred-leaved rose grew, and the scented verbena,

the blue periwinkle and the rich balm. And there, too, time came with ruthless and unrepentant hand and swept the board, even as here, in this place, on the way to the end of the road that runs by Bungonia.

As we turned from this acre of the past the eye caught the ridging of the grass. "Black soil! . . . Potatoes! . . ." we said, in the sudden release of knowledge awakened out of the years. The hearth-stone itself was but one ridge among others. Where was the household? Gone like a thought on the wind, no man knows whither. Yet, it may be that in some far land a man dreams great dreams and does fine things because a woman of the dust dreamed here.

. . . . The blue sky arches overhead, and under it a battalion of soldier birds chase a crow with cries like tiny bayonets of sound piercing the air, diminished to points as the distance grows. And as I lie here looking back over the years, almost I ask, was it a dream that we were all there together? Was it a dream? . . . . Is life, itself, but a dream? A fancy blown from the lips of chance, and scattered, who knows how, on the unreasoning winds of a cosmic void?

Ah, Love, if this were no more than a dream, yet were it sweet.

## CHAPTER X

### OLD FENCES

“**H**OUND of the Road, my brother, fellow wayfarer even as I, what cheer?”

“The lone road and the heart to follow; the steep rise and the will to climb; the One-Tree Hill and the eyes to see.”

“The One-Tree Hill?”

“Aye, brother; and beside the tree grow two shrubs, one on either side. And of the two one is dry and stunted, and one is living green.”

Cheerily we go, foot-slogging the way, taking what comes, yet always within call of the vision beyond the hour and the slow feet. The driven wheel sees less than we, for all its speed. It reaches the end more quickly, but the end is all that it has. It does not know the way it goes, and all that it sees of the road is a blur. Slow as we are, we see the heart of Nature even in a decaying fence. For though man made the fence, it is still of her empire. She puts out her hand and marks it as sun and rain turn it to grey, as lichen clings

to it and moss beards it. The red orange of the fungoid spreads its stain, but it is her mark. Decay sets in, but it is her law. . . . .

In one panel of a fence, in one rail or post, there is the painting of a man's life-time of light and shade. Beautiful greys and grey-greens, drabs and browns, such as no brush has set to canvas. If ever, too old and broken for the way, I have to come to be the thrall of a house, I shall carry with me, even in dreams of remembrance, the grey fences of the road. Old and faithful, silent watchers that guard what man gives them to guard, they held the land for man when neither spark, nor wheel, nor wire came to his aid. Beautiful as hands, the crest of a thousand wavelets of human effort in the sea of man's deeds and possessions, who can see them and forget?

An old fence is a garden; a garden where sun and time plant their flowers. An old rail is as beautiful as any weathered boat. There will be weathered boats to paint when there will be no split-fences. Yet the split-fence differentiates the new lands from the old. Would that I were a painter! . . . . I look back through the years and see the frail hands of a child on a rail, marking its texture, "loving" its feel, drinking in with the eager eyes, with

the poor thin hands, everything it unfolded of form, of light and colour. The child's heart ached in its fullness of wonder and beauty, seeing all things as the created living, and not as the mechanical dead, or the lifeless that had never lived.

. . . . Slowly the child died, for no one entered into its world. God knew what He knew when He gave Adam a mate. Death is the solitary; in fellowship is life. From the high tower of its own sensibility the child looked out, but no little cloud of dust rose even afar off on the road that edged the plain; no Sister Anne answered out of the silence. But sometimes, in wonderful hours, the old Road-fellow feels as though a presence burned near, and the shadowy child walks, companion-like, along the way. . . . Sometimes, in wounded hours, he hears its tears.

## CHAPTER XI

### O FRIEND OF THE LIGHT

"Happy he, on the weary sea,  
Who hath fled the tempest, and won the haven,  
Happy whoso hath risen free  
Above his striving. . . ."  
"What else is wisdom? What of man's endeavour,  
Of God's high grace, so lovely and so great?  
To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait,  
To hold a hand uplifted over hate;  
And shall not loveliness be loved for ever?"

Euripides (Gilbert Murray's translation).

**W**HEN the flesh wearies, as in its own strength weary it sometimes must, when the road is no more as it was for the once quick foot and the adventuring heart, then I shall turn back to my books and the remembrance of a high look on the face of a friend. And there I shall find a leadership of thought, so risen in glory above the commonplace, that its light will shine upon that, too, till it also is illuminated within and about, and the soul sees that there is nothing common which God hath made. Even now, as in the ante-room of the shadow I wait my

sentence, I look up from suffering and loss and thank God for Gilbert Murray; he who has given to the Greek, reaching out pagan hands to touch the still Invisible Hem, something no one not of the Old Church ever could have given. And I find that of all beautiful and wonderful passages written in human philosophy none lifts the heart higher than this: "To stand from fear set free: to breathe and wait: to hold a hand uplifted over hate." The whole conquest of life, even of death, is in these words. In them small and selfish things fall away; trust stands; false hope lies slain in certainty. Not in the purchased, but in the attained, man reaches up and lays his hands upon the cross, pagan or Christian, and looks up by faith sustained! To the stoic this great translator adds that indefinable something which only the son of his ancient Church ever gives to the world; that sense, cleansed of all hardness, of the ineffable beauty of the spiritual. "What of man's endeavour, of God's high grace, so lovely and so great? . . . And shall not loveliness be loved for ever?" The wonder of these words never lessens, their freshness never dies. And from this one's mind turns to Tennyson, forever shorn for want of what this church, had he been her



child, could have given him, and which he most attains when he comes nearest to her. For in Morte d'Arthur the beauty is not all of the flesh, nor the passion wholly of the world: "If thou shouldst never see my face again pray for my soul. . . ." Ah! and thinking of this, do you remember that noble passage, the unforgettable lament in Mallory? For me, I should like to have that with me even in the grave.

" . . . . And the verdict?"

"Rest."

How shall I rest who have loved the road? Can the wanderer who has watched the stars sit among women and chatter embroideries, or listen to the eloquence of contempt of the idle for those less fortunate than themselves?

Everywhere, says Augustine, the greater joy is ushered in by the greater pain. It may be so; but the greater wisdom is not always ushered in by the greater folly, as in Augustine's own case! And not to everyone is it given to stand, as he did with his mother at the end of the day, and say, "She and I were discoursing there together, alone very sweetly, forgetting these things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are be-

fore" . . . . If the long roads are all to lie behind would I forget them? No more than Augustine, even in his most longing upward look, forgot the sins that lashed him to his saintship.

. . . . Rest! . . . . Rest! . . . . And at the end of rest, what? I have been so often under the shadow that, if it comes suddenly nearer, it comes as a thing long known. Perhaps it is the shadow of a wing, and when it comes very close, it may be that I shall see only the edge of silver, and the everlasting light that shines upon it. For, though you know me as one, there be many brothers of the road, and some of them are brothers to me. Of these, one showed me the road of the Printing Press; one showed me the road that went down to Jericho, and there I saw my fellow-man fallen among thieves; and a third, he took me by the road of Books. But the fourth, he walks ahead. And when it is very dark, he waits, and there is a lantern in his hand. Sometimes as he goes he says, even as Augustine, "*O amare! O ire! O sibi perire! O ad Deum pervenire!*" Oh, and have I not said it too, even as he?

*"Oh to love! Oh, to go! Oh, to die to self!  
Oh, through all things else to come to God!"*

If, through the shadow, we come at last to that, shall we who suffer repine, be fearful or faint because of the hardship of the way? Ah! in such case is not the way but a part of the reward, a proving of the metal? And shall the proud metal grieve?

We meet on the roads, all sorts of men; and we judge each other as we go. They judge me, I judge them. We talk as we meet and pass, and the Romany brings his store even as night brings its stars. I found this when once, on a long track, I fell in with Henry Lawson. Afterwards I sent him a piece of verse which somehow went astray, so that he never received it. . . .

Sometimes in the wandering—but it is rare—there comes one great as a ship. And his head is filled with a well stowed cargo and primed to the very verge of life's content. He rides the waves of life in sanity and in strength, purposeful, strong, and enduring. Soemtimes such a one has a full sail of imagination set on the masts of aspiration, and all his being is threaded through with the sensitiveness of intuition. Then indeed do leaderless men find a leader, and the uncomforted know comfort. For within such souls lie all the fiery engines of strength, of passion, and

of power. Yet their gift to the world is an infinite patience of compassion, of mercy and understanding. Rich in thought, yet quiet, swift in response to a call, stable as a rock in the hardest sea, the weak cling to them, the beaten take courage from them, the suffering tell their wounds. Only the small-minded are afraid or scornful, as all such are of those who are faithful and filled with power. For how can the lesser, having neither faith nor power, know in a friendly way these things in those who have them? The touchstone of self is the realization of others.

When old problems are renewed, or through changing circumstances awake clamorous to life again, the ancient mines of the forgotten open their sealed mouths, and out of the mullock-heaps of memory the gold wash shines in the pan. So, out of Spain and a book read in years long past, I see in a present reminder, and with the strangeness of new vision, the gold of a story missed in the heat of the eager days.

The story is of a rich man who, in great learning and much reading of books, had satisfied his heart, till, measuring his gain, he found that the fuller he became of years and wisdom

the less he found the peace of God in the things of the world and its knowledge. And so he took the road, even as we, and coming upon a beggar who lay broken and full of sores upon the steps of a shrine, he said to him, "Good-day, brother!"

And the beggar answered, "I never had a bad day."

"But," said the traveller, looking pitifully upon the man's sores, "may God send you better fortune."

"I make no complaint of fortune!" replied the other.

"How can that be," asked the man of learning, "seeing that you are covered with the wounds of hunger, and broken by the hand of disease?"

"God sends all things, even these," said the poor man. "When the sun shone it warmed me, and I rejoiced; and when the storm came, I rejoiced in that too; for all things are of His hand, even these sores. And shall I who took the good repine for the evil?"

"Who then are you, who from the dust speak high things?" asked the first man, for he marvelled greatly at such patience and piety under suffering.

"I am a king," the beggar said, speaking

very softly, and as though he saw beyond the visible the things of the invisible.

"And your kingdom?"

"Is in my dominion over my soul, and in the conquest over the waywardness of my own will. And in my kingdom there is peace and none rebel."

"And," asked the other, "how did you make this conquest, which so many strive to attain and so few achieve?"

"I prayed to God and found it."

"When did you find it?"

"When I became His."

Then went the learned man on his way strangely moved, to ask, as indeed he might, why faith gave such power when knowledge failed to hold. And I, often I followed after that man in thought, and wondered if, as he went, or as he returned to his home, in a sudden light of understanding did he too find voice and cry, even as these others: "*Oh, to love! Oh, to go! Oh, to die to self! Oh, to pass through all things else and come to God!*" And, also, of these two the question would arise, Which of these is son of the bondmaid, and which of the free woman? For one was poorer than Lazarus, and one was richer than Dives.

Of the multitude of other tellings that stir thought and waken the heart to love and faith, there is another brave story, let the world put it aside as it may.

You will have read how Robert the Bruce, when he was dying, made the Douglas swear that he would carry his heart to the Holy Land for burial, and of how "the good Sir James" turned aside to fight to the death and for his soul's sake against those enemies of Christendom, the Moors in Granada. And you will also have read how, when he met the Saracens, he lifted up the casket containing the king's heart, and, flinging it into the thick of the fight, cried, "Press forward, brave heart, as thou wast ever wont to do, and Douglas will follow thee or die!" And die he did, defending the honour of his lord.

Apocryphal? Not all; for loveliness, in spite of the times is loved for ever; and what can be national and characteristic is never wholly apocryphal; nor is that which teaches nobility. For the things of the ideal live. The dream is born of the spirit, the spirit was before the flesh, and shall live after it. Therefore for this will a man follow the Word, even though his reason ask, "Is this true?" and "Can such things be?" For, as Augustine

says, the heart has a reason and a knowledge of its own which go before the things of the fixed hour and the moment of experience. It is the mind that counts time, not the heart. To the heart a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day, and it alone can leap the barriers of change and see the immutable in the changing.

So, let the world criticize as it may, as long as men dream great things, the heart of Bruce will call on such to follow, and faithfulness and daring lie in a word.

What else is Wisdom? What of Man's endeavour,  
Or God's high grace, so lovely and so great?  
To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait;  
To hold a hand uplifted over hate. . . . .  
And shall not loveliness be loved forever? . . . .

"What are these wounds in Thy hands?" they asked of One who was wounded. And sadly and sorrowfully the answer came, "These are the wounds wherewith I was wounded in the house of My friends." And do these words not also draw? *O amare! O ire! O sibi perire! O ad Deum pervenire!* Oh, unto these wounds! unto these very wounds!



*If thou shouldst never see my face again  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by  
prayer*

*Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy  
voice*

*Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what were men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer. . . .*

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